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QUEEN'S FOLLY.

BY STANLEY WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FLIGHT IN THE NIGHT.

RACHEL fell with stunning violence, and had she struck the road she might have paid for her resolution with her life. Fortunately she fell on the turf beside the way, and even before the carriage came to a halt she had staggered to her feet. Shaken and breathless as she was, the will to escape was still uppermost, and there was in that small frame wit as well as courage. The road was open, without fence on either side, but she had the quickness to foresee that she would be first sought on the side towards which she had fallen; and before Girardot set foot on the road she had staggered across it and crept through the shallow ditch on the other side. While the tutor, appalled by the catastrophe, was still unshipping with shaking fingers one of the lamps, she pushed her way through the brambles, and by the time he reached the spot, and began to throw his light—which blinded him to all but the ground on which it shone—about him, she had sunk down behind a bush and lay still as a hare in her form. But the bushes that hid her were no more than three or four paces from the road, and never did poor Puss's heart beat more wildly than the girl's.

Girardot fully expected to find her lying dead or injured in the way, and when he failed to do so, his first feeling was one of pure relief. But to that, anger at her obstinacy, anger and a baser feeling quickly succeeded, and once assured that she had escaped with uninjured limbs, the tutor ran back along the road, flashing his light before him and calling on her to stop. He wasted half a minute in this, while she cautiously edged herself a little farther into the covert. Then, persuaded that she had not gone that way, he returned as speedily as he could, and did what she had foreseen that he would do. He crossed the ditch on the side on which she had fallen, and

pushed his way amid the undergrowth, still calling her name and throwing his light hither and thither.

She had waited, trembling the while, for this, and the moment that her ears told her that he was breaking his way through the bushes she rose and under cover of the noise groped her way farther into the thicket. It was a wild edge of common, a wilderness of brambles, thick in one place, thin in another, and set sparsely with thorn trees. She tore her gown and her hands and scratched her face, but in her excitement she felt no pain, and so long as she dared and she could hear her pursuer moving she crept stealthily on. Then when she heard him leap back into the road, she sank down again. She heard his voice rise, answering the questions of the post-boy. And now she guessed that he was beating the ditch on the side next to her.

But she was by this time at some distance, twenty or thirty yards from the road, and she was wiser than to move. She trembled indeed, when she saw his light flashing over her head and knew that he had at last entered the brake and was beating the edge of it this way and that. But she only held her breath and crouched the lower. The wind of the night soughed over her, the unknown fathomless night that ordinarily held so many terrors for her. But now her only terror was of him.

And oh, the relief when she saw his light retreating and again heard his feet sound on the hard road. A second conference followed, but now the voices were less distinct. Apparently the conclusion at which he and the postboy arrived was that the fugitive had been quicker on her feet than they had calculated—that she had, after all, fled back by the way they had come. At any rate the carriage was turned, not without delay and some cracking of the whip. A moment later she saw with tremulous thankfulness the lights travelling back towards Fordingbridge.

She waited five minutes until the last sound of the horses' feet had died away, and then she scrambled back into the road. She was free, but now that the crisis was over she sobbed with excitement and could hardly stand. Her left hand, strained in the fall, was nearly useless, she had lost a shoe, her knees trembled, her heart seemed to be bursting. And she was alone on an unknown road, in a strange country, in winter.

Many a one, as unused to hardships as she was, would have lost hope and sunk down in a swoon that at that season might end in death. But Rachel was of firmer will. Mother, sister, home rose before her, and though her head ached and she was very sick, she

limped painfully away along the road. Some house, some help she must find if she persevered; and though more than once sheer giddiness brought her to a stand, always she went on again. The stones of the road bruised her unshod foot, a cow that bounced up before her drew from her a gasp of terror; but she held on. The cottage fireside shining in the night beckoned her, and more than once, and half unconsciously, she called on her mother.

And by and by hope cheered her. High up on her left she espied in the universal gloom a single light, and she pressed on desperately towards it. A light! If it was not a star it must mean a house, it must mean help. But the road, which at this point was hedged on either side, did not always lead towards it; at times she lost sight of the light, and the ascent that rose to it taxed her last reserve of strength. But at last she drew abreast of it; she saw dimly a gap in the hedge, and conjectured a gate, found it and leant upon it. She made out a low building, from a window in which the blessed ray seemed to beam, and she staggered across a sloping farmyard, groped for and found a door. Too weak to call out and sinking with fatigue she beat on the door with her uninjured hand.

She leant her head against the rough wood. If they would not come? If they would not let her in? She knew that she had not the strength to go farther. She tried to cry out, but no sound issued from her parched throat. If they did not come she must fall where she was. Again and desperately she struck the door.

Then, joy! She heard a heavy step descending naked stairs, saw a gleam of light under the door, heard the slow tramping of slippered feet across a stone floor. A voice asked gruffly who was there. She forced herself to utter some faint sound, the door was opened, slowly and suspiciously, and blinded by the sudden light the girl tottered across the threshold.

'Lord ha' mercy!' cried the stout woman, half dressed, who confronted her. She held up the light that she carried, and with amazement, and it must be owned with suspicion, she surveyed the stranger. 'Who be you, wench?'

The girl could only point to her throat and whisper a hoarse word. But her white, drawn face, her torn, disordered dress and the blood that disfigured her all spoke for her. 'God ha' mercy!' the woman repeated. 'What has happened to you?'

Without waiting for an answer, and though her surprise had still in it something of misgiving, she thrust forward a chair, and

Rachel sank into it. After another searching look the woman bustled away and returned bearing a mug of milk. Again she looked her visitor over, withheld the milk, and hurried up the boxed-in stairs. A moment and she was down again, attended by a faint smell of brandy. 'There, sip up that,' she said, and setting her arms akimbo stood glaring at the girl. After a pause, 'Ha' someone set on you?' she asked.

Rachel had drunk and gasped, and a little colour returned to her cheeks. She heaved a deep sigh, but instead of answering the question she looked at the door. 'Can you lock it?' she whispered. 'Oh please, please lock it!'

The woman shrugged her shoulders, but complied. She had fancied at first that the girl was a gipsy, and at farmhouses gipsies are no welcome visitors. But by this time her eyes had assured her that, torn and stained as the girl's clothes were, they were no country wench's. She marked the unshod and muddied foot, the scratched and bloodstained face, and pity got the better of suspicion. 'Lord's sake,' she repeated, 'someone has mishandled you, child! And someone should pay for it. Seems a constable's job. D'you come in here, and I'll stir up the embers. You're all of a shake wi' cold.'

Beckoned to follow, Rachel limped after her into an inner kitchen where a half-extinguished fire smouldered on the hearth. The woman placed her on a settle while she stirred the wood to a blaze and lowered a kettle that hung above it. 'I saw the light,' Rachel whispered thankfully.

'Then 'twas lucky my old man was sick. But you'—the woman stared at her—'you be no Whitsbury girl. Who be you if I may ask? It is late for a young lass like you to be tramping the roads.'

'Someone—I wanted to get away from someone,' Rachel faltered. 'I jumped out of a carriage. You are sure, you are quite sure, you won't let anyone in?'

'No fear! The door's locked, and 'twon't be opened again, noways. But there's my old man a-thumping. He'll be in a fine stew to think what it's about. Do you take another sip, my dear. There's naught in it to harm you, only a spoonful of what John Tredecant, the goodman's cousin that lives seaward, sent us Christmas time. Do you take off your stockings, miss,' she continued, with another shrewd glance at her clothes, 'and I'll bring you water to fettle yourself when I've settled my man. I'll make you a bed on the settle, maybe.'

She disappeared, and lulled by the warm air of the kitchen, soothed by the homely aspect of the pots and pans gleaming in the firelight, of the racks of fitches hung overhead among bunches of herbs, Rachel leant her head against the wooden back of the settle and closed her eyes. But only her body rested, her nerves were still ajar, her brain worked. In thought she lived again the horrid hour, the trying scene through which she had passed; or if her mind for a moment wrenched itself from it, it was only to busy itself with the position in which Girardot's cruel trick had placed her—with what would be said and what would be thought. The Countess had been kind at parting, but beneath her kindness the girl felt a subtle, a latent antagonism; and in what other quarter could she look for support?

True, if her story were believed—but if it were not? She had not the strength to fight a battle, or face the suspicion that she foresaw. Only in one quarter, only in one house could she be sure of understanding, and passionately she longed for her home.

She was crying softly when the good wife returned and with rough motherliness bathed the sprained wrist and bound it up. She helped the girl to restore some order to her clothing, and to Rachel's enquiry, 'Why, you be at Whitsbury,' she said. 'From Fordingbridge? Why, all of four miles for sure. And where be you from, miss? From Queen's Folly? Well, I never!' she ejaculated in a tone of surprise. 'Why my husband's brother, Jacob Mew, he've a farm under my lord. But good gracious, my lady, who'd ha thought of you running the roads at this time o' night?'

'Oh, but,' Rachel explained eagerly, 'I'm not my lady. I'm only the governess, Mrs. Mew. And——'

She broke off and clutched the woman's arm. Someone had knocked at the house-door! As Rachel had knocked half an hour before, someone was knocking now, but more loudly and more vigorously, with a heavy hand. Rachel stared at the inner door, still holding Mrs. Mew's arm. 'Oh don't, don't let them in!' she whispered. 'Promise me you won't.'

Mrs. Mew looked her uneasiness. 'Twasn't my old man?' she suggested doubtfully.

'No! No!' Rachel muttered. 'It was there! At the door! If we are still, if we don't answer, he may go away.'

'Drat him, I hope he will!'

'But you won't let him in?' the girl insisted, her scared eyes roving the room in search of a hiding-place. 'Promise me.'

The woman nodded, and the two held their breath. But the knocking was repeated, and the sick man, hearing it, thumped the floor and made further silence futile. 'I must fend him off some ways,' Mrs. Mew said, 'or my old man will have a fit. But don't you fear, miss, I'll speak to him from the window—he don't come in here!' And in spite of Rachel's efforts, who would still have detained her, she went into the outer room and closed the door behind her.

Notwithstanding the woman's promise the girl trembled. The man had shown himself so reckless, so desperate, so lost to all goodness that she held him capable of anything. He might drag her out by force, and what could the woman do to prevent him? Or he might tell some story—say that she was mad, perhaps. Terror conquered her, and after listening awhile she crept across the floor to the door that closed the narrow boxed-in stairs, and holding it ajar she prepared to slip upstairs.

She could hear the woman's voice, and the length of the parley added to her panic. Nor without cause, for presently she heard the key grate in the lock and heard a heavy step, a man's step, enter. The woman had betrayed her!

Sick with fright, she crept up a couple of stairs and drew the door close behind her. In the darkness her heart beat as if it would suffocate her. Her senses seemed to be sharpened; she could hear, though the door was closed, the solemn tick of the tall clock and the chirp of a cricket on the hearth. Then the heavy step drew nearer, entered, crossed the floor of the room she had left. She heard the faithless woman cry, 'Well to be sure, and what's become——' and then as, too late, she turned to escape up the stairs, the door that masked her was plucked open and a hand grasped her skirt.

'Softly, softly, ma'am!' said a well-known voice—but not, thank God! the one she had feared to hear. 'Let's have a look at you! I've crowded tops'les and royals to come up with you and now I'm here—hallo!' The speaker's voice rose, suddenly and ludicrously charged with alarm, 'I'm d——d if she's not fainting! Here, missus, here. Help! This is your business!'

But, 'No! No!' Rachel gasped in the immensity of her relief, and she stepped down. 'I'm not going to faint, indeed, indeed I'm not. I shall be well—in a minute.'

It was Captain Dunstan. He supported her to the settle, but Mrs. Mew, who was still a little in the dark, judged by the sternness

of his face that the young lady would catch it by and by. But the Captain's face was in shadow, and Mrs. Mew may have misread it. Still his next words confirmed her impression.

'In another scrape?' he said, standing over poor Rachel, his hands, one of them holding a whip, in his pockets. 'D'you know, young lady, you are more trouble than the worst pickle of a youngster I ever sent to the cabin gun! There's seventeen miles—and about-ship twice—that I've followed you, and if I've not lamed Medea I'm precious lucky. Damme, what have you to say for yourself, eh?'

Rachel looked up through her tears. 'I am very, very grateful to you,' she said—and her eyes said more than her words. She felt safe at last—safe now. She knew, heaven knows why, that she could trust this man.

'And, by gad,' he continued, surveying her, 'you've been in the wars and no mistake!'

'I never see a young lady so mauled!' said Mrs. Mew. 'It's a wonder she did not lie down in the road and die. I took her for a gipsy when she come in. She was like nothing else!'

'A gipsy? Too much of a gipsy! For ever in one trouble or another!' Yet his voice was more gentle than his words. 'But now, enough of yarning, young lady. There'll be time enough for that by and by. D'you understand, ma'am, that we are not out of the wood yet, and we've got to act now if we act at all?' He looked at the tall clock. 'I've thrown my coat over the mare, but if she's not to catch cold and make matters worse we must be moving. D'you think you can travel?'

'Travel?' Mrs. Mew exclaimed, and decided that Dunstan or no Dunstan—and she had been brought up to revere the name—the Captain was hard as a stone. 'Why in her state,' and indeed Rachel's drawn face and weary eyes told the same tale, 'she is no more fit to travel than I am to read print!'

'She's got to travel if she can,' the Captain replied doggedly. 'She's got to sleep at the Folly early or late, and there's no more to it!'

'Then it will be dead,' said Mrs. Mew, bristling up in her indignation.

'Alive or dead!' said the Captain.

'Well I never!'

But he turned to Rachel as if Mrs. Mew had not spoken. 'Now, young woman, we shall see if you are made of sugar-stick or no,'

he said. 'I suppose you understand? I suppose you understand why it's necessary if the Missus don't? Can you go?'

Rachel flushed faintly. 'I have only one shoe,' she said.

'Only one shoe? Good God!' For a moment he seemed to be upset. 'Good lord!' he repeated, an odd note in his voice. The next moment, however, he recovered himself. 'Shoes be hanged!' he said. 'One shoe or no shoe, ma'am, will you go? Full-rigged or jury—will you try?'

Rachel's eyes met his. 'I will try,' she said meekly.

'Good!' He was evidently pleased. 'Black Dick, who only smiles when the bulkheads are knocked out, could say no more, ma'am, nor Mad Dick better. Come! we'll round the point yet! I'll double the stirrup over the saddle and you'll ride the mare to Fordingbridge—she's as quiet as a lamb now. And I'll get horses at the Greyhound, if I have to burn the house down! There, Missus, you get her ready, while I rig the saddle.'

But Mrs. Mew could not contain herself. 'It's my belief the young lady will die,' she said. 'I say it, and I should know. I declare I think you are a very cruel man!'

'Oh, she'll not die!' the Captain said carelessly, and he turned to the door. 'She's not of the dying sort!'

'Her foot's cut to ribands!'

He hung a moment at the door. He seemed to hesitate. Then 'Well, plait 'em up!' he said heartlessly, and tramped out.

'I declare,' Mrs. Mew said viciously, 'the one man's as big a brute as the other!' Which was an enormous thing for her to say of a Dunstan. 'Are you going to trust yourself with him, my dear?'

'Yes,' Rachel said.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RETURN.

BUT more than once during the endless dark hour that followed she repented. Of course they made but slow progress, Rachel perched, trembling and as helpless as a sack, on her uneasy saddle, the Captain trudging beside her and leading the mare. Now and then he threw her a curt word of encouragement, but for the most part he plodded on in silence, or at rare intervals broke into a line of doggerel and as abruptly broke off again. The girl, shaken with every step, could have wept with pure fatigue. The saddle galled

her, her wrist burned, she ached in every limb, she knew that a start or a stumble would unseat her; and though he had forced his riding-cloak upon her, she was chilled to the bone.

She could have wept and would have found it a relief to weep. But she did not, for the man who walked beside her, and if his drooping head and slouching step went for anything, was as weary as she was, had taken possession of her. He had set up a standard and she felt herself bound to act up to it. He had not spared himself, and he had made it clear that he expected her not to spare herself. He had forced her to understand that there were times when to suffer in body was the least costly way of escape.

So she ached and shivered, and a score of times thought that she would fall, but she endured in silence, because the man would have it so. For her heart was full to bursting with gratitude to him. As she looked down on his bent head as he toiled beside her, as she measured what he had done and what she owed to him, she was infinitely moved. She was nothing to him, her peril or her safety alike indifferent, her fate a trifle. Yet on the mere suspicion that she was in danger he had stooped from his place, he had thought of her and for her; for her, the dependant who was no care or charge of his. He had faced, barely risen from a sick bed, the perils of the road, perils that loomed large in her eyes, and had ridden the interminable miles that they were now retracing—to save her! He had done this to save her and her good name. For she did not forget that; on the contrary she thought much of it, not knowing for which to be more grateful, the delicacy with which he had laid his finger on the difficulty, or the firmness with which he had forced her to meet it.

And it had been nothing to him. What did it matter to the Honourable George Dunstan if his brother's governess, poor silly child, was ruined by a villain's deceit and her own folly? Nothing, less than nothing. She longed with a full heart to thank him, longed for fitting words, yet knew that she would never dare to thank him.

At long last a dog barked in the night, buildings loomed up on either hand, they plodded wearily into the main road at Fording-bridge. But the village slept, not a light shone in cottage or house, and it was not until the Captain had shouted again and again, hammered the door and thrown gravel at the windows, that the inn by the river awoke. At last a lattice opened, a sulky voice asked what the devil was the matter. What did they want at that time of night?

'Horses!' the Captain answered stormily. 'A chaise to Queen's Folly, man! And hurry, hurry! Double mileage if you are quick!'

The authority that rang in his voice, his mastery, his persistence seemed god-like to Rachel, cowering and shaking at his side—he had lifted her down without ceremony. Jove-like, too, was the effect of his name. Lights flickered everywhere, and within a minute or two she was inside, warmed at a fire, obsequiously tended by a dishevelled hostess. 'An accident!' the Captain explained shortly. 'The young lady has been thrown out of a carriage on her way to Salisbury. I came up and—now quick's the word, man. We want to get on!'

But the landlord had a word to say, and by and by drew him aside. 'No accident, I am afraid, Captain,' he muttered. 'A rum business. The boy turned in as I was closing. And from what he let out—he was fair frightened—the young lady threw herself out. A mercy she was not killed 'cording to him, for they was going eight miles an hour.'

'What became of the man?' the Captain asked, seeing all was known, and gripping his crop with an ugly look.

'Paid 'im off at Burgate Corner—they come down into the main road there or you'd ha' met 'em. He went off afoot, mad, and swearing to raise your hair! I asked the lad what they was doing on the Whitsbury road, but he shut up quick at that. He wasn't here ten minutes. Mortal afeared he'd hear more of it, I fancy.'

'D——d sneak! If I had been here——'

'But the young lady wasn't hurt?'

'No thanks to them! But do you keep a still tongue, my man. Least said soonest mended. Are the horses ready?'

A minute later the team jingled out, and Rachel, so weary that she could hardly stand, was handed into the chaise, the Captain plunged in after her, and they rumbled over the bridge, and took the road at a canter, the horses, stung by the cold wind that blew across the marshes, a little out of hand. The way was flat, the post-boys intent on earning their fees pushed on. It was not the first time that Rachel had travelled that road with the Captain, but little had she expected on that former occasion that she would ever retrace it with a heart bursting with gratitude to her companion.

Wisely he let her be, and not a word was said until they had rattled through sleeping Ringwood and were breasting the rise to the Forest, where the hill and the sandy road brought the horses

to their collars. It was the girl who, harassed by fears of the reception before her, and quivering with nervousness, broke the silence. 'They will be all in bed,' she said, her voice betraying her alarm at the prospect.

'Not they!'

'But they'll not be expecting——'

'They will be expecting Medea,' he answered grimly. 'I'll wager Tom will be up.'

'Oh!' she cried. 'Was it Medea?' She was horror-stricken. For Medea and her chances were the talk of the house, and had reached even the schoolroom. 'Suppose—suppose something had happened to her.'

'Suppose something had happened to you!' he retorted. 'Don't be silly, ma'am. She'll be sent over in the morning. She'll be none the worse. It is to be hoped you'll be none the worse either.'

'Oh, dear, dear,' she quavered, not at all reassured. 'I hope I can get in without rousing anyone.'

'Rousing anyone?' he replied bluntly. 'We're going to rouse all hands. That's the course we are laying. It is no use whimpering, ma'am,' he continued, as Rachel murmured a dismayed remonstrance. 'Come aboard with a clean sheet! That's your line. Better a jobation to-night than everlasting talk to-morrow. I suppose you have the sense, young lady, to see that. Why damme, if you are to sneak aboard through the hawse-hole, what have we come all this way for, when you are not fit to stand on your feet? No, ma'am, no, we'll pipe all hands, man the side-ropes and go aboard Captain's fashion and no sneaking. Confound it,' he added, with an irritation that was not so real as it sounded, 'what are you afraid of?'

'Lady Ellingham.'

'Lady Ellingham? And you throw yourself out of a carriage going at eight miles an hour! Yes, you did, girl. I've heard all about it. Threw yourself out head first to escape that d——d trickster. I wish I had been there, the villain! And you are afraid of my lady! Pooh! Spare your breath to cool your porridge.'

Somehow the words were not harsh, and before Rachel could explain the Captain broke into one of his queer ditties:

'To Rodney, brave but low in cash,
Your golden gifts bespoke!

Ay, by gad, he got all he deserved, did Rodney !

To Keppel, rich but not so rash,
You gave a box of oak !

But that's a d——d slander ! However, here we are, and there's a light in the stables.' He thrust out his head and 'Rattle 'em up, my lads !' he cried. 'And give 'em a hail ! Shout like blazes !'

A moment later and he was out of the chaise and thundering at the great doors, while the postboys shouted and Tom, who had appeared on the instant, jabbered anxious questions at his elbow. Rachel, quailing at the uproar, crept out and hid herself behind him. She would fain have implored him to desist, but with her hand on his sleeve her courage failed. A light flashed in the hall windows, the heavy bolts were withdrawn, and a startled Charles, whose tousled head suggested that he had been sleeping at his post, looked out.

The Captain strode in. 'Her ladyship in bed ?'

'Yes, sir. It's two o'clock.'

'Call her woman then. Do you hear ? Bid her rouse my lady. And be quick, sleepy-head !'

'Oh, no, no !' Rachel prayed. 'Please, please don't !'

'Call her ladyship !' repeated the Captain, raising his voice. 'Ask her to be good enough to come down. Say I've broken my leg if you like. And stir your stumps, do you hear ?'

'Oh, please, please don't !' Rachel pleaded. 'It's quite wrong ! It is out of the question !'

But the Captain only stormed. 'Off, quick, man ! And bid 'em bring lights and get some of the women—Mrs. Jemmett, anyone ! And you,' he turned sharply on the panic-stricken girl, and thrust forward a chair, 'sit there ! You are not fit to stand, ma'am ! And now you may look as sick as you like ! The sorrier the better !

To Keppel, rich but not so rash,
You gave a heart of oak !

Hearts of oak—there, leave it to me, I'll spin the yarn. Hallo, Bowles !' He turned on the astonished Bowles as the butler entered, half-dressed and gaping. 'Get some brandy, and don't goggle your sleepy eyes at me, man ! The young lady is ill, devilish ill, d'you hear—been pitched out of a chaise and the devil knows what ! Had the deuce of a time ! Brandy, man, and I want Mrs. Jemmett !'

A mild voice from the doorway asked 'What about Medea, Captain?'

'Oh, d—n Medea!' he returned, but with a distinct fall in his voice. 'She's at the Greyhound at Fordingbridge. Go back in the chaise, Tom, and get her. Bring her up in the morning.'

But poor Rachel? While Captain George strode hither and thither, and stormed, and seemed intent on making as much noise as he could, she would have given the world to sink into the floor, or to be a hundred miles away, no matter what happened to her. She wrung her hands. The house to be roused for her! The Countess to be dragged from her bed for her! Oh, it was too much! She could have wept in pure vexation, and for a moment came near, very near to hating the man who was bringing all this trouble upon her.

But he was obdurate. He would manage the thing after his own fashion. She, all must give way to him. And when innumerable servants had peeped in on various pretences, with lights or no matter what, the moment she so much dreaded came. Lady Ellingham, in a wrapper and with her maid behind her, appeared on the stairs and came gliding down, a stately figure with a face of very dubious meaning. Surprise, wonder, and displeasure were all painted on it, and now Rachel did indeed wish that she could sink into the floor.

'George!' My lady's voice was pitched high, as from the last step she surveyed the scene—the girl cowering in her chair, the Captain striding to and fro, the gaping servants. 'What has happened? What is it?' She held up her candle.

But the Captain was unabashed. 'The matter?' he retorted. 'Why, I've brought back Miss South devilish ill! She's been pitched out of the chaise—threw herself out, to speak by the log. 'Twas a trick of that d—d villain—it was as I thought. I found her on the road, lamed and by herself, and lord knows what would have happened to her if I had not found her. And she's half dead. Some of the women must put her to bed. She's not fit to do anything for herself.'

But my lady still looked displeased. 'I am sorry that Miss South is hurt,' she said coldly. 'But was it necessary to call me down?'

'I thought so,' with a sort of thrust—almost a challenge in his tone. 'Captain responsible, Kitty.'

'I think if you had sent for Mrs. Jemmett,' my lady began,

and then her eyes met Rachel's; she read the timid appeal in them, marked the exhaustion stamped on the white, weary face. She saw the bandaged arm and the torn, disordered dress, and her sympathies awoke. She deplored the event, she had the strongest reasons for disliking the Captain's part in it, but she was not hard-hearted, and she moved to Rachel's side. 'I hope that you are not seriously hurt?' she asked in a gentler tone. 'But you'll tell us the tale to-morrow. You should be in bed now. Mrs. Jemmett will see that you have all you require and——'

'And let someone stay with her,' said the Captain bluntly. 'She'll not sleep in a hurry. She's had the deuce of a time.'

'Very good,' my lady agreed—but thought again what a pity it was that George would mix himself up in it. She had had her suspicions before, but they were more than suspicions now. 'Mrs. Jemmett, will you——' and turning from the girl, who had not found courage to say a word, she gave her orders.

But when Rachel, venturing at last on a faltering word of apology, had been borne away in the housekeeper's care and the servants had dispersed, my lady turned on the offender. 'Oh, you ridiculous man!' she said, with a gesture of despair. 'Why did you do it?'

'What? Go after the girl?'

'Yes.' And then, deftly shifting her ground as she saw his face darken, 'And get me out of bed in this absurd fashion?'

'To stop people's tongues! And the women's tongues in particular. Oh, I know them. Still, thank ye, Kitty, you're a good sort, and I'll remember it. And now, my dear, you may go back to your beauty sleep. It's pretty near the dog-watch, ain't it? By gad I am tired!'

'Foolish, foolish man!' she said. But her eyes were soft, she could never resist him. 'And you'll pay for it. You'll be a perfect wreck to-morrow. And I wish that were the worst of it! Was it——'

'Girardot? Yes, it was, the villain! The letter was a forgery. He got in and was making off with her—had bribed the postboy no doubt. He had got as far as Whitsbury on the by-road—Heaven knows where he was going to take her! Then she threw herself out, and it is Heaven's mercy that she didn't kill herself!'

'But are you quite sure——' she began, and then, 'Now, don't be angry, George—but are you quite sure that she wasn't—that she didn't know——'

But George bristled up so fiercely that she stopped. 'I'm sure of this,' he said, 'that she is as good a woman as you are, and I know no better. And she has the pluck of ten men. Does it look like collusion when she threw herself out of that chaise at—'

'Look here, my lad!' An unexpected voice broke in on their conference. My lord in a fluttering dressing-gown and with a candle in his hand looked down from the landing. 'Suppose you stop quarrelling about the filly and tell me if you've brought the mare back! If you've lamed her, George—'

'She's as sound as I am,' the Captain said meekly. 'I haven't stirred a hair on her.'

'Well,' with a mischievous chuckle. 'I hope that you can say the same of the young one! Oh, George, George, it runs in the family after all! And my lady thought you a Joseph!'

'Go to blazes!' said the Captain.

'No, I'll go to bed, as you permit it,' my lord rejoined, and as he retreated down the corridor, he sang:

'Oh, they loved and they rode in a hackney chaise,
And "My own" says he, and "Oh don't" she prays.
But the night was dark and the spark aflame,
And the chaise was close and his lips the same,
And what does a tender "Oh don't" avail,
When pins are fickle and laces are frail?'

'D—n it!' cried the Captain savagely. 'Fred, I'll break your bones!'

My lord's laughter died away above. But there was a very odd look on my lady's face as her eyes followed his retreat. She breathed quickly.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CAPTAIN AT BAY.

CAPTAIN DUNSTAN flattered himself, in his seaman's simplicity, that he had stayed the flood of talk. Of course he had merely guided it into another channel, and vainly did Mrs. Jemmett, staunch in her defence of the family, set herself against it. 'I'll never believe it till I see it!' she declared, her cap-ribbons quivering with indignation as she stirred her tea. 'A little whey-faced thing as came sneaking into the house without so much as Bo!

to throw at a goose! And took her tea in this very room and sat in that very chair and was thankful! Yes, I say it, Bowles, thankful for a word of notice!

Bowles reflected. His back to the hearth, he was taking his 'morning,' a silver measure of small beer. He looked into it and apparently he found inspiration in it. 'At any rate she didn't put on no airs,' he said.

'Airs?' The housekeeper's cap-ribbons shook again. 'I should think not! Who is she to put on airs, I should like to know! The governess, and a poor piece at that! But it's not her. It is the Captain what gets over me. He that was ever so steady. I'd no more have believed it of him than of old Caesar on the chain there!'

'Ay, ma'am, but that is where the trouble is!' Bowles said. 'If the Captain weren't steady, and I'm sure it's a wonder he is, and blood thicker than water, there'd be no trouble. It'd arrange itself, Mrs. J.'

Mrs. Jemmett frowned. 'Bowles! Remember yourself!' she said. 'Not in this room if you please. Besides,' she continued, yielding to temptation, 'there's two goes to that, and though it may be only her slyness, I'll not think as bad of her as that. But her impudence? To think of the likes of her lifting her eyes to the family! Why, it'd be a disgrace to the name as would never be wiped out!'

But Bowles was cynical. 'It wouldn't be the first as we know,' he said. 'My lord's rode the name pretty hard, and not much harm done.'

'That's a different thing,' the housekeeper replied tartly. 'Not that I'm defending him and his creatures, heaven knows! I'd like to see 'em all tied up and whipped. And if my lady weren't an angel, and I don't care who knows it, there'd ha' been mud thrown before this, enough to——'

'Now, Mrs. J., Mrs. J., you're taking sides.'

'Well, I do think of the family, Bowles! And I declare I could almost find it in my heart to speak to the man myself!'

'What? My lord? You never mean it!'

'No, drat the man! Nor did I say it. You know what I mean. To the Captain, of course.'

'Well,' he decided thoughtfully, 'I wouldn't if I was you. He'll hear enough from her ladyship. Did you mind her face last night, leastways this morning? Well, I did, and you may take it from

me she no more liked all that rumpus than we liked being called out of our beds. No, ma'am. And I shall be surprised if the young lady is here this day two weeks.'

'But will that turn him, d'you think, Bowles?'

'It depends, ma'am, on how my lady handles him. He's hard to drive but easy to lead. And if anyone has the length of his foot it's her ladyship.'

'Well, I'll never believe the thing till I see it,' Mrs. Jemmett rejoined. 'A little mouse of a child with no more about her than a curl-paper! Why, Jane the housemaid is good looks beside her, to say nothing of Miss Froyle, as it's my belief would have him to-morrow and thankful—and come for the purpose if you ask me. And as fine a figure of a lady as you'd wish to see. I declare I can't think what the men find to see in this chit! First the tutor, and then the Captain!'

The butler smirked. 'Well, ma'am, I've looked her over myself. And though she's slim, I've noticed her, and she's not so thin as she looks, and she's well shaped about the——'

'Bowles!'

'I was going to say, the figure, ma'am.'

Mrs. Jemmett stared. 'Well, I declare! You've looked her over, have you, and—well to be sure! Indeed? But where women are concerned, men are fools and always will be.'

'The sect, Mrs. J., the sect!' Bowles replied with feeling as he eyed her ample proportions. 'We're weak, ma'am. We're weak! The slaves of fancy.'

'Slaves of fiddle-de-dee! You'll be looking at Jane next I suppose. Let me catch you at it, my man! Well, I never! If I let my fancy run away with me like that——'

'Does it never run away, Mrs. J.?' the butler asked softly.

Whatever the answer—and a topic so delicate is better abandoned—Bowles was right on one point. If Onions was to be believed, there was no braver man in the service than his master. But when the Captain presented himself some two hours later in my lady's room, he certainly wore a guilty air which he strove to cover by making the most of news that had come in by the mail. It was weighty news, but with a good conscience he might not have published the matter with so excessive an air of triumph.

'Kitty, give me joy!' he announced. 'Give me joy, my dear! I've heard from Whitehall, and by George I've got the *Polyphemus*. The *Polyphemus*! Seventy-four, French built, the finest lines you

ever saw! A perfect duck, as handy as a frigate, and as fast on a wind as half the fourth-rates!

But my lady was not to be moved. She preserved a provoking calmness. 'Well, I'm pleased, George,' she said, 'if it pleases you.'

'Pleases me? I should think it does please me! The *Polyphemus*! Why, half the men between the Hamoaze and Harwich will be wanting to cut my throat! It's great news, my dear. Splendid news! I'm to commission her at Devonport, rig her out there, and when she's ready take her round to Spithead, to join Lord Nelson's squadron—but there!' He stopped abruptly. 'That's secret orders and I shouldn't have told you, so do you keep a still tongue about that, Kitty. There's great work afoot, but I mustn't out with it yet. I'll wager though we shall give the country something to talk about this time!'

Still my lady refused to be carried away. 'You will be at sea for some time then?' she asked thoughtfully. She did not seem to be displeased by the prospect.

'Why?' he protested, with a sudden drop in his tone, for he saw her drift. 'Do you want to get rid of me? But, lord, to get, of all the d——d craft I know, the *Polyphemus*. I could kick myself for joy of it!'

'But——'

'Confound it, Kitty,' he said ruefully, 'and I thought you would be as pleased as I am!'

'Never mind about the ship for a minute,' my lady said. 'I want to speak to you about something else.'

'And I can think of nothing else! But there!' He threw himself into a chair. 'Speak on!' He looked uneasy.

'You know, you made an absurd fuss last night,' my lady said. 'But that's a small thing, and I won't say that I don't understand your reason. But have you considered—I'm sure that you know very well what I am going to say—how far you are going with that girl? And what is to come of it? It's no good jumping up and down like that, George! If you are just amusing yourself with her it is bad, and it is unlike you and hard on her. Though,' she continued with contempt, 'as the little fool has lost her heart once already since she has been here, I don't know that that matters or that I have much sympathy to spare for her! Still, she seems to have behaved well last night, and I'm willing to think the best of her—to think at any rate that she deserves a better fate than to be played with.'

'I agree.'

'Then——'

'But I'm not playing with her!' He sprang to his feet. 'I am going to make her my wife.'

My lady shrugged her shoulders. 'I was afraid so,' she said, unmoved by his violence. 'I was afraid that you had that in your mind, George. But you haven't spoken to her?'

'No!'

'Not——'

'Not a word!'

'Then,' she rejoined, with a sigh of relief, and her face cleared, 'there is no harm done yet. Thank God for that! She has no claim on you, and I implore you, George,'—my lady's voice was very serious—'to listen to me before you give her one. I beseech you to look at the thing as if the case were not your own. Can you say that she is a fit wife for you—for a Dunstan? She may be a good girl, I am not saying that she is not, though she is a simpleton. It is not that. But she is not of any family, she is not of our world, and she is not of the class in which you should look for a wife. You do not know even who she is.'

'She is a parson's daughter.'

'A poor curate's, I suppose—if her tale be true. But all governesses are curate's daughters. It is the common tale, and as often true as their references. But grant it true, she is no wife for you. She is a dependant, almost a servant. And whatever you say—there, it is no good bobbing up and down!—a nobody. You can't get out of that. And you ought to marry somebody, and somebody—I don't care whether she has a penny or not—in our class.'

'Charlotte Froyle, I suppose?'

'Why not—if you like her?'

'But,' he exploded, 'I don't like her!'

'Well, at any rate,' she said, rising in defence of her friend, 'she was not in love and madly in love—yes, George, if is no good wincing, it's the truth—with another man a month ago.'

'She wasn't in love with him last night!' he retorted. 'I don't think you quite grasp what she did. She risked her life—and never in all my time, boarding or cutting out, have I run greater risk—to escape from him! If she don't bear the marks of it to-day I'm a liar! She threw herself out when it was just odd or even whether she broke her neck or no! I tell you, Kitty,' he continued, beginning

to stride the room in his excitement, 'that girl is one in a thousand and she's the girl for me. She has a spirit and a courage in that little body—that dear little body, yes I'll say it, damme, and not be faced down by you—that would not shame a Nelson! That would shrink from nothing and count no cost if duty led her that way! I've seen her tried three times and—not worthy? not of my class? I tell you there never was a woman more fit to be the wife of a seaman and bear a seaman's children! And the wife of a sailor and the mother of my children she shall be, God willing—if she will have me!'

'If?' my lady cried in equal wrath and contempt—but in truth she was touched, and her anger if not her scorn was forced. 'If? Are you fool enough to suppose that she would refuse you?'

'To-day? Yes. Did you not say a moment ago that she was in love with another man a month back?'

'Yes, the little fool! And probably is to-day for all this fuss and outcry! But if you think that with all you have to offer she will not jump at you——'

'I do think so,' he insisted. 'If she is the girl I take her for, yes I do. My dear, you don't know her. You are on the quarter-deck and she is forward and she keeps her distance and behaves according! You don't know what a brave heart she has, what a spirit, what a courage!'

'I tell you what it is, George!' my lady said viciously. 'I am sick of hearing of her courage. Her courage? You talk of nothing else, while I know that ever since she has been here she has been a cause of trouble. First that wretched man and then you! Oh, George, it is impossible—impossible that you can be such a silly! And when I look at you and see you tired and no more than the shadow of yourself this morning and think that she is the cause of it, and that she has come between you and me—oh, I wish to heaven,' my lady cried with passion, 'that I had never seen her! Wasn't it enough that she must risk your life in that wretched duel?'

'She?'

'Well, didn't she? Don't look at me like that. What—what is the matter? Wasn't she the cause?'

'Of the duel? No, by G—d she wasn't! Did you think that, Kitty? She had nothing in the world to do with it! Not a jot except that she tried to stop it.'

'Then who——' but even before she finished the sentence, fear leapt into her eyes.

'Who? Another person. It doesn't matter who. It is over and done with. D—n the duel! Let's hear no more about it. I'm sick of it!'

'But—no,' she said with decision, 'you must tell me, George!' She breathed quickly, a hand pressed to her breast. 'If it was not about this girl you fought, who—oh! You don't mean that it was—about me?'

'Confound it, Kitty!' Impatiently he put the thing away with his hand. 'What does it matter if it was? It is over and done with. And it was no fault of yours. The blackguard said something that he should not have said. That was all.'

'About me?'

He nodded sulkily. 'Well, in a way. And I wish to heaven that I had lamed him for it.'

'And I didn't know!' My lady spoke softly, and there were tears in her eyes. 'Oh, George, my best, best friend, what shall I say to you? What shall I—and now,' she continued, with a sob half suppressed, 'I am going to lose you. She has stolen you from me—and I hate her for it!'

George shuffled his feet uncomfortably. He abhorred a scene. 'Well, you can do this,' he said earnestly. 'You can be a friend to her, my dear. She needs one and will need one. More, I want you to promise to keep her here till I come back. I look to be away three months, and how am I to keep her safe till I come back? Or find her if she is not here?'

My lady looked at him, and there were doubt and trouble in her gaze. 'If I thought it was for your good,' she said with a sigh, 'I would do far, far more for you than that. But I don't, oh, George, I don't. I can't. She may be all you say, and good. And yet she may be quite unfit to be your wife. There are only Fred's life and the boy's between you—and the Folly and all this. And you ought to consider that. You may think her this or that here, where there is no one to compare with her; but if you saw her in town? What figure would she make in town—in the Square? She has neither presence, nor birth, nor training. She has never learned the way of it, she could never hold her own. You would see her beside others—'

'Charlotte Froyle, I suppose!' he cried. 'You would have me marry her? That doll? That pattern of primness and propriety? Why you are only a simpleton after all, or you are blind, my lady! Or you would see that this girl would fill, and has the spirit to fill,

any station she is called to, and fill it so that those about her will know that she is there! Ay, any station—though God forbid, God forbid indeed that she should ever take yours! She is quarter-deck right through, my girl, and will send 'em to leeward fast enough when there is occasion. I know, I know, I tell you.'

'You foolish, foolish man!' my lady said. And sighed and smiled.

'Not a bit of it! You'll see. But you haven't promised me yet. You must promise me you will keep her, Kitty. I shall be miserable if I don't know that she is with you, and safe.'

'But George,' she protested, 'it is the most absurd thing! I am to keep her whether I will or no. And what if she won't have you after all!'

'That is my business.'

'Or suppose you change your mind?'

'Well, that is my business too.'

'You are not going to speak to her now?'

'No,' he owned gloomily. 'It would be useless or I would—within the hour. She is not ready for it, and I'm not such a puppy, I don't think so well of myself—Fred has told me often enough that I am a bear—as to believe that I can carry a girl by storm; nor so ill of her as to believe that she will take me to-day if she was in love with another man yesterday. One foot on board and one on shore—she's not of that kind. No, I must give her time. But when I come ashore again and have made her know what I want—well, she may not take me then. But at any rate I shall have saved her from that scoundrel. You will promise me, Kitty?'

'Well,' she said at last, unwillingly and with averted eyes. 'I will promise, George.' After all, she reflected, the future might hold many chances. The girl might see another, or he might change his mind.

He was not quite satisfied. 'And you'll play fair, Kitty? You'll not cross my hawse?'

'You dear silly man,' she cried, 'with your hawses! I suppose that you mean that I am not to set her against you?'

'Well, about that.'

'Well, I won't then. There! I won't even——' she looked at him half quizzically, half tenderly. 'You know, George, you are very, very simple after all.'

'And what then?' he asked suspiciously. 'You won't what, eh?'

'I won't do what nine women out of ten would do, stupid man. I won't tell her that if she marries you she will ruin you. Though if she is what you think her, that would checkmate you, if anything would!'

He stared. 'Lord!' he exclaimed in amazement. 'What women are, the best of them!'

'Ay!' she replied with venom. 'You will find that out some day, even if she is all you think! She'll surprise you, my man! I know she's an angel now! She is all smiles and syrup! She has no faults, no tempers, no whims, no tricks, no will of her own—she's perfect! Because you love her!'

He nodded, smiling foolishly.

My lady stamped her foot with passion. 'And I hate her! I hate her, for with her big eyes and her silly child's face she has robbed me of my brother! And I am to bear with her and hug her and fondle her! Oh, George,' my lady continued, and there were angry tears in her eyes, 'you are a monster!'

'But if you gain a sister?' said foolish George.

'Gain a sister?' she retorted passionately. 'Gain a fiddlestick! Go away, go away, and let me cry by myself!'

(To be continued.)

W. H. HUDSON'S 'BIRDS IN A VILLAGE.'

RICHARD JEFFERIES was already dead when his greater successor, W. H. Hudson, wrote the first of that magnificent series of books on people and wild life in the southern parts of England which were the means of making him famous.

How 'Birds in a Village' came to be written is told by Hudson himself. Characteristically, it was a chance meeting with a child who fed the waterfowl in St. James's Park which gave irresistible force to the impulse to fly from London. 'The picture was in my mind all that day, and lived through the next, and so wrought on me that I could not longer keep away from the birds, which I, too, loved; for now all at once it seemed to me that life was not life without them; that I was grown sick and all my senses dim; that only the wished sight of wild birds could medicine my vision.' And so he escaped from London and wandered aimlessly till he came to the scene of 'Birds in a Village.' There he remained for more than six weeks.

All Hudson's writing is strangely uneven in quality, rising to the heights and plunging down again incomprehensibly, but not one of his books is more full of gold than this first adventure in the natural history of England. There was some Puck-like perversity in him which persuaded him sometimes to withhold, or to alter, the name of a place which had pleased him, or had been the scene of an emotional experience. But he could never restrain himself from distributing clues with a lavish hand, and although the scene of 'Birds in a Village' is unnamed, it is not impossible to identify.

'A rustic village not too far away,' he describes it, 'not more than twenty-five minutes walk from a small station, less than one hour by rail from London.' The way to the village was through cornfields, bordered by hedges and rows of majestic elms. Beyond it, but quite near, there was a wood, principally of beech, over a mile in length, with a public path running through it. On the right hand, ten minutes' walk from the village, there was a long green hill, the ascent to which was gentle, but on the farther side it sloped abruptly down to the Thames.

'On the left hand there was another hill, with cottages and orchards with small fields interspersed on the slope and summit, so

that the middle part where I lodged was in a pretty deep hollow. There was no sound of traffic there, and few farmers' carts came that way as it was well away from the roads and the deep narrow winding lanes were exceedingly rough, like the stony beds of dried-up streams.' (I quote from the 1919 edition; the original has at this point been extended by two invaluable pages.)

No treasure-seeker could hope for better guidance. Long before I had ever set eyes on the village its identity was beyond doubt, for after drawing a rough chart according to the directions and comparing it with a map of the middle Thames, near which the place was known to lie, I found that my sketch resembled exactly the piece of country between Cookham and Marlow, where the village of Cookham Dean nestles in a hollow. Its claim to celebrity is not so great as Selborne's, for even if Hudson should eventually be pronounced greater than Gilbert White its share in his making was less. But all the same, as the inspiration of the first of his great books on English country, Cookham Dean has a title to be considered a place of pilgrimage of the first rank for nature-lovers.

It so happened that it was in June, the month which Hudson spent in it, that I was first able to see Cookham Dean. But thirty-two devastating years had intervened—the countryside which he had seen and described about the midsummer of 1892 was material for the antiquary by 1924. His reluctance to revisit the scene of an emotional experience, wise at any time, was most wise at the particular time when he wrote; to have seen the wreck of his favourite haunt by the brook, or the sophistication of the village itself, would hardly have given him pleasure.

Most villages within thirty miles of Hyde Park Corner show signs of the suburban or the week-end habit, but Cookham Dean has suffered uncommonly badly. In the early 'nineties when Hudson first saw it, it was a village in a hole in two senses—it was at the bottom of a valley and it was a complete cul-de-sac. On the north, behind the steep chalk ridge of Winter Hill, ran the Thames, which enfolded it in the great curve of Bourne End Reach, lying within half a mile if one walked due west, and still presenting a barrier less than a mile and a half distant in the opposite direction, with no bridge between. This alone would have isolated the place, but in addition a long strip of private woodland—Quarry Woods—beginning at the river bank without even a towpath intervening, blocked the remaining open side for more than a mile, with no road (but a pedestrian right of way) through it.

No wonder that on the occasion when a new squire attempted to secure the privacy of his coverts by blocking this vital right of way the 'Badgers' of Cookham Dean assembled in force and chopped down the barricade—an episode told by Hudson and still remembered in the district.

Because of this cul-de-sac position and the fact that it was a clear mile from a station—Cookham, which also served for the better known riverside resort in the other direction—Cookham Dean enjoyed an exceptional quietness. It was on the way to nowhere, and nobody came to it for its own sake—except Hudson.

All that has been altered now. A road has been cut right through Quarry Woods, descending in long zig-zag pitches and running straight across the meadows at the foot to Marlow bridge, which is little more than a mile away. The making of this road has turned the village street into a through route, and provided a new outlet for the motorists whom one meets wandering round and round the lanes like a stage army.

Cookham Dean is an extraordinary place, and it has as many thoroughfares as a city. The opening of 'Birds in a Village,' already quoted, mentions only houses in the deep coombe and houses on one hill-side, but at the present day both hill-sides are pretty thickly covered with scattered buildings; there are more on Winter Hill and down to the Thames beyond, and very many more straggling southward to the common and east towards the station. The builder and the estate agent have been busy; since 1911 the population has almost doubled. There is no real centre to the place; in fact there are two main villages, one along the valley and the other about the church on the hill-top, and skeins of outlying dwellings. Although there is hardly an old house in it Cookham Dean still succeeds in being picturesque on account of that astonishing looseness of composition which Hudson remarked on. Almost all its two thousand people live in houses surrounded by orchards and garden plots: it is a natural garden town.

The villagers had once the reputation of being a rough lot, not through any peculiar innate boorishness, but because such an out-of-the-way place kept alive the old exclusiveness which labelled every stranger a 'foreigner' long after the more sophisticated parts had grown out of it. Already in the 'nineties they were getting civilised; I was afraid after seeing how the Londoners had swamped the place with their new houses that it would be so utterly permeated by modernity that I should find the 'Badgers' as

extinct as Dinosaurs. But they are not; they still flourish more or less apart and keep a tolerable monopoly of the Bottom, leaving the slopes to the invaders.

In an attempt to find somebody who could remember Hudson—vain it turned out, for an obscure stranger, however extraordinary, who stayed in a place only for six weeks a clear generation ago is not easily recollected—I went into the inn where he put his foot in it by asking quite innocently whether there were any badgers in the neighbourhood. The villagers were not fond of their nickname, and it was sometime before they were persuaded that he was a harmless naturalist with no intention of making fun of them. (None of the stories about the 'Badgers' appeared in 1893, when the incidents were still fresh; Hudson worked them in at different points in the new edition in 1919.)

The inn at least seems not to have changed at all. There are plain wooden benches and a couple of trestle tables in the room—the bar is outside—and it has a stone flagged floor and a big kitchen range. With its low ceiling and small casement window the interior seemed to have suffered no unwelcome improvements since Hudson sat in it questioning the 'rough-looking brownfaced man with iron-grey hair' who acted as spokesman for the company. In fact only the two principals seemed to be missing; for the half-dozen 'Badgers' I met there might as easily have belonged to the generation before, so little, apparently, had they altered. They are short, sturdy people, as short and thickset as the mediaeval peasants who built cottages for us to stoop and bruise our heads in. Their present leading spirit is a splendid character with a round ruddy face and merry twinkling eyes; though still inclined to be stand-offish to strangers they are very pleasant fellows, and a magnificent contrast to the sullen resentful breed of the factories. They are probably better off now than in the 'nineties and quicker-witted: some of their scoring problems at the game of darts (which seems to be extremely popular) would overcome a senior wrangler. That 'heavy, dull and depressed look,' which Hudson found characteristic of the older villages, seems to have been almost dispelled: they have more independence, less continual work, and less anxiety for the future. And they go into Maidenhead by 'bus to 'the pictures,' which apparently has a civilising effect on them.

This same red double-decker 'bus plies along the road across the Common. Otherwise that is unspoilt: the space where the bird-catcher spreads his nets is still more or less open, the pond is still

there, and best of all the grasshopper-warblers are still there. In a single bushy sallow willow I saw at the same time two reed-buntings, two willow-wrens, a whitethroat, a grasshopper-warbler, and a cock linnet—an extraordinary natural aviary which was dispersed again in a moment. The common is not so large as Hudson makes us believe—reading of it being 'so extensive that, standing on its border, just beyond the last straggling cottages and orchards, the further side was seen only as a line of blue trees in the distance' produces the impression of such a gigantic common as England does not contain. By the crude evidence of the ordnance map it is considerably less than a mile long—a trifle over three-quarters. But it forms part of a more or less continuous chain of commons, screened from it by a line of trees and a brick-works, stretching to Maidenhead Thicket. It is a narrow common, nowhere more than a quarter of a mile broad, and practically cut in half so that it is almost the shape of an hour-glass. It is an extraordinary thing that Hudson of all men, who was brought up in the boundless pampas and never saw England till he was nearly thirty, should have had such queer ideas of distance. Granting poet's license for the extent of Cookham Dean Common, he did it no more than justice, for it is certainly an exceedingly pleasant common and rich in bird life. On this subject it must be permissible to expand, for though his book contains much that has nothing to do with them it was the birds on which he was ostensibly writing.

During his stay Hudson kept a list of the species he succeeded in identifying, which amounted in the end to fifty-nine. Whatever evil has overtaken the place its birds have not suffered—I counted fifty-three kinds in the course of a couple of June days. Since then my own Cookham Dean total has been brought up to exactly fifty-nine. (In the wider neighbourhood, on both banks of the Thames and including winter migrants, I have met with ninety.) But Hudson disclaimed the intention of making a long list: 'there were more,' he says, 'I heard the calls and cries of others in the wood and various places, but refused, except in the case of the too elusive crake, to set down any in my list that I did not see.' Under that rule two additions of mine are disqualified—the curl-bunting, which I heard singing hidden in the crown of a tree, and the pied or greater spotted woodpecker, which I have heard calling in Quarry Woods several times, but never actually seen closer than Little Marlow, a mile away across the river.

It is a pity that Hudson did not give his list, for such records are

always interesting and often extremely valuable, since birds unaccountably appear in a district or mysteriously vanish from it in a very short time. But it is possible to make a fairly accurate reconstruction of what his list must have been. He mentions by name forty-one of his fifty-nine species in various parts of the book: the throstle, blackbird, nightingale, blackcap, whitethroat, sedge-, grasshopper-, wood-, and willow-warblers, chiffchaff, hedge-sparrow, wren, blue and coal tits, pied wagtail, tree pipit, red-backed shrike, goldfinch, greenfinch, chaffinch, house-sparrow, linnet, bullfinch, corn-, yellow-, cir-, and reed-buntings, starling, carrion-crow, rook, jay, kingfisher, cuckoo, wryneck, tree-creeper, nuthatch, whinchat, stonechat, corncrake, turtledove, and pheasant.

Some of the rest go without saying: the swallow, martin, and swift; robin, great tit, and skylark; spotted flycatcher, woodpigeon, mute-swan, and moorhen. That brings it up to fifty-one; taking the most likely birds from my own list for the remaining eight unknown, I should put lapwing, partridge, jackdaw, marsh tit, long-tailed tit (he does in fact say 'all sorts of tits,' though only two are named), heron, dabchick, or wild duck, and kestrel or sparrowhawk. Except the last pair, which are conspicuous but scarce, all these are common about Cookham Dean. There still remain a few birds on my list unclaimed. Hudson could not have seen, as I have, the red-wings dropping down to roost on the common out of a stormy January sky, for they are all gone before May Day. Nor would he have stood much chance of revelling in the sight of a pair of splendid peregrines over Winter Hill. But the lesser whitethroat, garden-warbler, and sandmartin are all present in June; if he had seen them they deserved better than to be ignored. (The garden-warbler is a much-overlooked bird: Gilbert White missed it at Selborne as well.)

On the other hand, Hudson saw half a dozen species which I failed to find—the tree-creeper, sedge-warbler, whinchat, stonechat, carrion-crow, and corncrake. Of these, the corncrake may have relapsed into silence before my first visit, but more probably this is one of the many English districts which he has lately deserted. The sedge-warbler and the tree-creeper were almost certainly present but overlooked. About the carrion-crow I feel doubtful; very likely the gamekeepers have at last succeeded in stamping him out. Burnham Beeches, five miles as he flies, is the nearest place known to me where the crow can still be seen. The whinchat Hudson confesses to have been rare, but he says that he 'constantly met

the small, prettily-coloured stonechat flitting from bush to bush . . . never ceasing his low querulous tacking chirp.' That is where records are valuable: the stonechat is a conspicuous little bird, always keeping in full view, and he seems to have vanished utterly. The same thing has happened under my eyes in a part of Sussex where the stonechat was previously not uncommon. All the same, there are certainly stonechats about Bourne End: on the Buckinghamshire bank I have seen them within three-quarters of a mile of Hudson's lodging.

But if it is surprising that this one of Hudson's birds should have disappeared from the common, it is more surprising that so many of the rest are still flourishing. The grasshopper-warbler has already been mentioned; the one spot on the common which he still inhabits seems to be precisely the part where Hudson found him, leaving all the rest perpetually untenanted. At all events it is, as he describes, just out of hearing of the pool of water near the fork of the roads. The nightingale flourishes: 'the medicine of its pure fresh melody' is to be had abundantly on all sides. Hudson mentions a fact about the nightingale which sounds too good to be true, and about which I have never been able to satisfy myself: that when one starts singing 'the small birds near immediately become attentive, often suspending their own songs and some flying to perch near him and listen.' Now it is a common and perfectly true complaint that the nightingale is called a nocturnal singer, not because he sings more by night than by day—much less in fact—but because his song is spasmodic with long intervals of silence, and in the daytime more persistent singers drown it. Hudson himself mentions that these Cookham Dean nightingales never sang at all after dark, and that he heard them 'mingled with many other voices.'

If anything it might be argued most plausibly that when the nightingale begins singing the other birds sing all the louder instead of stopping to listen; certainly some of the fullest bird-choruses I have heard have had a nightingale singing in the midst to put them on their mettle. But in natural history generalisations are always dangerous: it would be rash to say that Hudson was mistaken. And I had, if not a proof, a very curious suggestion that within limits he may have been absolutely right, at Cookham Dean itself; for walking through the village one January day I heard a thrush repeatedly imitate the celebrated *jugging* note, which could only have been learnt by listening to a nightingale. (Hudson seems

to have changed his opinion of the term *jugging*. He wrote in 1893 'that rich melodious throbbing which is sometimes horribly called *jugging*'; by 1919 it was 'which is usually called *jugging*'.)

One other experience of Hudson's, though it properly belongs to the brook later on, may be repeated here for the sake of a similar coincidence. (He was hoping to find kingfishers): 'On the other side of the stream buttercups grew so thickly that the glazed petals of the flowers were touching: the meadow was one broad expanse of brilliant yellow . . . the bird I had been seeking darted out from the margin almost beneath my feet, and then, instead of flying up or down stream, sped like an arrow across the field of buttercups. It was a very bright day, and the bird going from me with the sunshine full on it, appeared entirely of a shining splendid green. Never had I seen the kingfisher in such favourable circumstances, flying so low above the flowery level that the swiftly vibrating wings must have touched the yellow petals he was like a waif from some far tropical land. . . The first bird's mate appeared a minute later, flying in the same direction, and producing the same splendid effect, and also green. These two alone were seen, and only on this occasion, although I often re-visited the spot, hoping to find them again. Now the kingfisher is blue, and I am puzzled to know why on this one occasion it appeared green. . . It is a sunlight effect, but how produced is a mystery to me. In the case of the two green kingfishers I am inclined to think that the yellow of that shining field of buttercups in some way produced the illusion.'

The coincidence was this: that the only glimpse I have ever had of this transformation of the kingfisher took place within a mile of the same spot. It was on a December day and the Thames was in flood. I was standing by the railway line on the other bank of the river when a kingfisher appeared, flying across an inundated cowslip field. He settled on a twig of the hedge close to me, but taking alarm almost at once dashed through the hedge, crossed the line about twenty feet above my head, and dipped immediately into the green grassy lane along which I had just come. Here, flying between the hedges and only just above the grass, with the sun over Winter Hill shining full on his back, he appeared the same 'shining splendid green' as the one which Hudson had described. But in this case there was no buttercup field, which detracted not only from the vision but from the value of Hudson's explanation. (In the original edition he simply recorded the fact without offering an explanation at all.) For myself, I think that the kingfisher being a

bird which we usually see at least breast high or flying over water, the most probable cause is simply the sun striking its back as it retreats in such a position that we happen for the moment to be looking down on it. Probably the background plays some part, whether it happens to be yellow or green, for it seemed to me that when at about fifty yards distance he swerved out of the lane and began to cross the ploughland he was transmuted to a bluebird again.

But the kingfisher and the nightingale between them have led me far away from Cookham Dean Common. I should not be surprised if the reed-bunting has increased there, for Hudson seems not to have met with it till he had known the place some time. Now it is plentiful, considering that the pools are so meagre. The corn-bunting, 'sedentary as an owl in the day time,' also survives, but I did not find the curl-bunting and the bullfinch nearer than Quarry Woods. Of the species which I noticed on the common or flying over it—thirty-eight all told—the goldfinch, which has fortunately outlived its gloomy half-epitaph 'very seldom seen,' the lesser whitethroat, pheasant, and partridge, a heron which flew over at some height, a kestrel and a sparrowhawk were among the most interesting not already mentioned as living there. The red-backed shrike, which unintentionally saved the linnets from the bird-catcher by pouncing down and frightening them from the nets, also remains an inhabitant, and the linnets themselves flourish.

It is surprising that Hudson should have had so little to say about the titmice, for they are all fairly numerous, especially in the woods. But he was certainly right in pronouncing the wood-wren the outstanding bird of Quarry Woods. I doubt if another place in England is so full of their music in May and June. The singers are often hard to find in the tree-tops, but the mysterious indescribable trill which had such a fascination for Hudson is to be heard on all sides.

It was at the foot of Quarry Woods, which cover the very steep slope from the hill ridge to the levels, forming a wooded bank more than a mile long and two hundred and fifty feet high, that the first of Hudson's favourite haunts lay.

'On one side the wooded hill sloped downward to the stream; on the other side spread the meadows where the rooks came every day to feed, or to sit and stand about motionless, looking like birds cut out of jet, scattered over about half an acre of the grassy level ground. Stout old pollard-willows grew here and there along the banks and were pleasant to see, this being the one man-mutilated

thing in nature which, to my mind, not infrequently gains in beauty by the mutilation. . . . At one point there was a deep nearly stagnant pool separated from the stream by a strip of wet rushy ground, its still dark surface covered with waterlilies . . . on the opposite bank there were some large alders lifting their branches above great masses of bramble and rose-briar. . . . A short distance from this tangle, so abundantly sprinkled with its pale delicate roses, the water was spanned by a small bridge which no person appeared to use, but which had a use . . .

'The unsullied beauty and solitariness of this spot' has been so shattered that perhaps it would be better to leave it out altogether. The three elm trees under which Hudson used to lie in the shade listening to the tree-pipit seem to have been chopped down, for the buttercup field across the stream has been fenced with barbed wire and mostly ploughed. I questioned the driver of the tractor which throbs up and down it; he had only been there four years and knew nothing of any trees. When I first set eyes on the place the little surviving strip of grass by the river was desecrated by a camp of boy scouts; the main road which passes quite close through Bisham and the new Cookham Dean road are both rackety with motor-traffic, and the water-lily pond is almost choked up with weeds. From the fact that the chain of eighteen tall old stepping-stones leading to the bridge (there is another bridge lower down now, which seems to be newer) runs across dry land, it seems that the place was formerly much more swampy, as Hudson described it. But, in spite of the tractor-man and the motorist and the boy scout and the rifle-range down stream, the place is still rich in birds. In the space of a few minutes I counted over a dozen different kinds. The dabchick and the moorhen can be watched from Hudson's bridge, swimming in the narrow brook.

Paths through the woods lead up to the village again. There are two notable absentees from these woods which Hudson remarked upon as particular disappointments—the magpie and the green woodpecker. The former I have never seen alive about Cookham Dean, but I know that he sometimes comes there, for once in a path through Quarry Woods I found his corpse nailed to a tree. So when Cookham Dean turns from its evil ways and repents sufficiently to deserve a living magpie, perhaps it will get one.

The case of the green woodpecker is not the same; for one reason he is not persecuted; for another he lives permanently at a very short distance from the place. And yet he avoids it. Hudson

never saw him at all; excluding one doubtful glimpse in Quarry Woods, I have seen him at Bisham, only a quarter of a mile away (during the floods, bravely climbing a diminutive tree whose base was some feet under water), and on the Buckinghamshire bank opposite to Winter Hill. It is understandable that he should dislike Quarry Woods, for the green woodpecker is no lover of beeches. But he ought to revel in the orchards, especially that magnificent cherry plantation separated from the woods only by a roadway—no longer grassy as it was in '92. The stout cylindrical trunks of the innumerable old fruit trees extend for acres; it is easy to believe that the plantation is one of the biggest of its kind in England.

Hudson described it, of course, as he described everything else that was notable about the village and its surroundings. Except one thing, the view from Winter Hill. It is an uncommon type of view: not at all distant (for no point in sight is much more than five miles away) but beginning almost underfoot and ranging across the Thames and its levels to the wooded Chilterns. And it is by no means bankrupt of bird life; the peregrines which cruised over it one spring morning have already been noticed, and it is hardly possible to stand there long without seeing pairs of hurrying mallards passing down the valley.

While he was at Cookham Dean Hudson stayed at a cottage in the hollow. Even after searching the whole book for clues, his information about it is extremely vague. The old orchards of apple, cherry, and walnut trees are still plentiful enough to make it doubtful which was the precise old grassy orchard which formed the boundary of the nightingale's lane. His cottage was certainly near a field—he confesses to being relieved that the nearest tree made choice of by a song-thrush as a singing stand was on the far side of a field. And it was certainly almost opposite another cottage, in the garden of which the girl on a swing outsang the last nightingale of the summer. It seems to have stood four or five yards back from the lane, for the nightingale which came to the door for crumbs used to sing on the gate at about that distance from Hudson's window, 'where his bright eyes could sweep the lane up and down.'

Among the score or so of cottages which might have been the one where Hudson lodged there is a single ancient creeper-clad little dwelling on the right of the road going up westward, so incomparably the most picturesque in the place that it ought to be selected and canonised, overruling all pedantic considerations of where Hudson actually did stay.

And on its own merits it seems to have the best claim. It stands back, as most of the rest do not, with cottages opposite, and there is a meadow behind it and an orchard down the lane. Moreover, it is in the one part of the village which can be described as being 'in the deepest part of the coombe,' and about two minutes walk from the pleasant green slope with a group of ancient pollard-elms at the foot of it which Hudson mentions (though he leaves out the chalk-pit behind it). At this point I have watched an extraordinary sparrow, who probably spends his life in the village. He is not an albino, but mostly of a very light creamy colour, as if the normal brown plumage had been dusted with flour. At rest he is merely uncommonly pale, but flying in the sun he appears brighter and more dazzling than a milk-white bird.

Up the steep lane towards the woods, only a few yards beyond this place and only a few minutes after seeing the white sparrow, I watched an unscrupulous trick played by a robin on a confiding baker. The baker's boy stopped his cart (which was an open two-wheeled one, with some crusts and bread lying exposed on it) at the gate of a house, and went off down the drive with his basket. As soon as he had shut the gate down pounced a robin out of the ivy, settled on the middle of the horse's back, hopped up on to the cart, and snatched as substantial a meal of bread as he could before the boy came back. By the time that happened he had taken cover again in the ivy, clinging half-hidden so that nothing showed but the blaze of his bright red breast with the sun on it and his determined little head. He did not retreat, though I passed on within a couple of yards of his robber's den.

E. M. NICHOLSON.

TALES FROM THE PERSIAN GULF.

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. H. AUSTIN, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

V. A PROTECTION TAX.

AFTER the digression made to the operations west of Ras Masandam, with which he was not intimately connected, we now return for a final review of Rahim Dad's movements. It has been shown that it was largely owing to the positive information furnished by that stout knave that the S.N.O. was justified in secretly assembling the greater part of the recently arrived mosquito fleet within the recesses of the Clarence Straits. The *coup* this officer had so skilfully planned to meet the new situation was completely successful; and Rahim Dad is, perhaps, entitled to some of the credit by having acquainted me beforehand with the gun-runners' intentions. Still, as he had not been the direct instrument of this haul of arms falling into our hands, he could not fairly expect further reward on that account; but that was a subject for future discussion.

All this time Rahim Dad, Salih, and one or two other 'nakhudas' continued to ply suspiciously between the Persian and Arabian coasts in the Gulf of Oman, carrying merchandise to and fro. I knew their principal object was to attract the attention of the blockading ships thereabouts, in accordance with Rahim Dad's arrangement with the Afghans. But no hint could I give to the naval authorities to pay little regard to these decoys, without imperilling the disclosure of Rahim Dad's secret compact with me. It does not require experience in an Intelligence Department to convince one that the fewer entrusted with secrets the more likely are they to be kept.

Thus it came about that, not long after the capture of the arms near Qishm, a seemingly familiar skipper and his dhow dropped into the clutches of the naval officer commanding the cruiser which had towed Rahim Dad and the nautch party into Jashk earlier in the season. This officer, it may be remembered, had then intended to permit the dancing girls to continue on their way unmolested; but as I had on that occasion suggested they should be brought in to Jashk, he thought it advisable to observe a similar procedure now. Although no arms were found aboard the dhow, his suspicions were

aroused by the 'nakhuda' appearing to court capture, as if in the interests of a third party. The man asserted he knew nothing about the gun-running operations as he had only just arrived from a long sea voyage to Zanzibar and back. He gave his name as Omar Khayyam to the naval officer. When taxed with being Rahim Dad, he admitted cousinship with that individual, and said he was supposed to resemble him very closely in outward appearance, but averred he was very different otherwise.

Such was the gist of the wireless message I received; and it seemed desirable in the circumstances for me to take this opportunity of making the acquaintance of Rahim Dad's lifelike cousin. He and his dhow were accordingly towed in to Jashk, and passed over to me for further examination.

On meeting the stranger from Zanzibar, when the steam pinnace had brought the dhow ashore at Jashk, a single glance sufficed to assure me that its skipper was no other than my old friend Rahim Dad; but there was such an appeal in his eyes as they caught mine that I decided to respect his incognito in the presence of the naval officer. I agreed that this cousin was certainly the living image of his notorious relative, and was not surprised he had been taken for him. Anyhow, I would thrash the matter out more at my leisure. Meanwhile, 'nakhuda' and crew would be lodged in the guard-room. The cruiser then departed to resume her preventive patrol.

When confronted with me later, the suppositious Omar Khayyam—I admired his poetic fancy in pseudonym—cast aside all further attempt at camouflage. He smiled unrestrainedly on being greeted with, 'Well, old maker of tents, what's your special grievance now? I imagine you are anxious to have a word with me, or you would scarcely have been captured by the "marn-i-war" and dragged here under suspicion.'

Yes, that was his main idea; he felt he could not just then detach his dhow from her mission by any other means, without creating comment among his confederates. However, in the first place, he wished to express his admiration for the very successful manner in which the capture of Afghans and arms had been effected in the vicinity of Qishm. He, of course, quite understood that he was entitled to no reward on that score. I rejoiced to learn of his moderation.

Proceeding, he said his trouble was that the Daria Begi had issued orders to all Persian subject 'nakhudas,' who had received

payment from the Afghans during the gun-running season, to submit accounts to him at once of what they had amassed by that means. This declaration was to be accompanied by a sum equal to one-third of that already received, as a *māliāt-i-hifāzat* (Protection Tax)—in the words of the *firman*. Failing compliance, the names of the defaulting 'nakhudas' would be handed over to the British authorities for such drastic action as the latter might desire to take against these Persian arms law-breakers! And Rahim Dad was, of course, one of those who had been served with this notice.

Though sympathising deeply with our colleague in his dilemma, I was not entirely surprised at the step taken by the new Daria Begi. I had judged him, at our interviews some time earlier, to be the type of Governor eager to seize upon any excuse for surreptitiously making something for himself out of the gun-running operations. The blow had now fallen, and Rahim Dad was obviously not best pleased at the iniquity, as he termed it, of the Persian official entrusted from Teheran with the good government of this outlying portion of the Shah's dominions. He was inclined to rebel, and disregard the demand on his hard-earned gains; but I counselled caution, and advised him to 'stump up' lest greater evil might befall him. We could afford him no protection as a subject of the Shah—and a notorious one at that.

That Rahim Dad was pretty certain to 'cook' his accounts was no concern of mine. This was a matter entirely between him, his conscience, and the Daria Begi. Still, the fact that he admitted in his return having received 6000 rupees from the Afghans, in spite of running arms free for them of late, and excluding the commission yet due to him for the Sohar-Sharjah scheme, went to prove the lucrative nature of his calling. Had he not amassed another 3500 rupees or so from the British, too? But the latter item was 'secret and confidential,' and did not, of course, come under the purview of the Daria Begi's *firman*.

In any case, Rahim Dad seemed to consider that he was doing the Daria Begi extremely proud by responding to his monstrous demand with a sum of 2,000 rupees. To make up this amount he requested the payment of the thousand rupees still due to him from me. He then asked my permission to put to sea again, in order to hand over the money in person to the Daria Begi at Bandar Abbas, as directed.

Thus Rahim Dad's account with the British was closed. Before he sailed, however, he again reverted with enthusiasm to the

recent operations off Qishm, much about which he had already learnt from other lips. When I suggested that the capture of the Afghans might render remote his chance of ever seeing the colour of his commissions, he chuckled knowingly. He was no fool, he reminded me, and had arranged for a very astute Arab broker at Dibai to look after his interests in the matter. On the departure of the Daria Begi for Bushire, he would drop in at Dibai, and hoped to pocket another 2000 rupees odd there. His intention then was to 'shut up shop' and enjoy his *otium cum dignitate* at Ziarat for the rest of the season.

He had made his peace with the young Baluchis, who thought that their period of imprisonment at Jashk was well recompensed by the 20 rupees received from him. They had voted him a 'jolly good fellow' and lauded to the skies his many other brilliant successes over the 'thick-headed Anglez.' So spake Rahim Dad. As for the Afghans, we were likely to hear little more of them this year. Few remained on the Arabian side of the Gulf; and those still on Persian soil were making preparations to depart for Afghanistan before the hot weather added to the difficulties of their long journey. All were 'as sick as mud,' he said, at the result of the year's operations, and vowed vengeance against the British; but he, fortunately, was regarded by them with the utmost good-will.

Matters had been very satisfactorily wound up, therefore; and as I, too, was shortly returning to India, I took this opportunity of bidding good-bye to Rahim Dad. It seemed probable that we should not meet again. My relief as Intelligence Officer during the summer months was to leave Simla in a few days to take over; so it was with genuine regret on both sides—I verily believe—that Rahim Dad and I then parted. He certainly had added to the gaieties of guessing, so far as I was concerned, by playing his new part well; and as he had contrived to collect a good many shekels under our aegis, whilst preserving a whole skin, he was not ungrateful, I should say, to the British.

Some days after his departure from Jashk, strange events apparently began to take place at Bandar Abbas. We were not in direct communication by telegraph or otherwise with that port, but picked up wireless messages of an enigmatical character flying between various blockading ships. All we could gather from these was that serious disturbances had broken out in the neighbourhood of Bandar Abbas; and that the British consul there had applied for a cruiser to stand by in case of necessity until the air cleared a

bit. One rather feared that the Afghans might be cutting up rusty, as a final kick at the British before embarking on their toilsome trek to their homes—without the rifles on which they had hoped to derive a big profit. Such an outbreak was well within the bounds of disgruntled and ruined men, as a reprisal for the hideous losses suffered by them this season ; so we awaited further details with some anxiety.

It was no little relief, therefore, to learn from a cruiser, which called in at Jashk a day or two later, that the transport carrying the 'fauj' had been summoned to the spot. The Afghans were not, after all, implicated in the disturbance. This was directed, not against the British consulate, but against H.E. the Daria Begi himself ; and by the local inhabitants. On arrival at Bandar Abbas, H.E. had taken up his residence in the Governor's house, and proceeded to collect the taxes said to be due to the Persian Government. Never a popular performance among Persians, the bleeding process on this occasion appeared to have been much aggravated by the abnormal demands of the new Daria Begi. Those victimised appealed in vain for justice. The Governor was adamant, and their Oriental patience under oppression then gave way, it seemed.

To the astonishment and dismay of the Governor, Government House was attacked one night by the incensed inhabitants, I was informed, of Bandar Abbas. The attack was with difficulty beaten back by the Governor's guard of 'tufangchis' ; but he then had the mortification of finding himself, the representative of the Shah, besieged for some days in the viceregal building. Much firing of rifles was indulged in by both sides, but with no great loss to either. Eventually, after a truly Gilbertian exposition of Persian warfare, the Daria Begi opened negotiations for buying off his assailants. Peace was once more proclaimed by H.E. paying out a considerable sum of money—presumably part of what he had squeezed out of Persian and Baluch during his residence.

It is difficult to picture a farce of this nature taking place anywhere outside Persia ; and when made aware of some of the details, my mind immediately turned to my old friend Rahim Dad, bound for Bandar Abbas after our last meeting. I was prepared to wager that he was not altogether innocent of complicity in the outrage, since he felt very sore at having to hand over so large a sum as 2000 rupees to the Daria Begi. At the same time it was my earnest hope that the old rascal had played his cards with caution ;

for to fall into the bad books of H.E. would probably prove fatal to his, and perhaps dull our, future prospects anent gun-running in the Gulf.

I need have suffered no qualms on that score. A day or two before my departure from Jashk for Simla, I was aroused from my midnight slumbers by my chief agent, who whispered, to my surprise, that Rahim Dad was without, and would like once again to bid me good-bye, if I did not resent the intrusion. In truth, I was pleased at the old man's friendly attitude, as thus evinced. There was nothing more to be got out of me now ; and I had really acquired a rough form of affection for the rogue. He, at least, had never let me down after vowing eternal gratitude for being permitted to work out his salvation on the British side. I felt, too, there was something yet to learn regarding recent events at Bandar Abbas ; so I bade my agent tell the old schemer I would gladly see him.

Without any conceit, I fancied I detected an air of depression in Rahim Dad's demeanour when ushered into my apartment to make his farewell bow ; so, to turn his thoughts into more cheerful channels for the moment, I began by congratulating him on having recovered some of the 2000 rupees he had been forced to pay over to the Daria Begi.

Although apparently astonished at my assumption, his responsive smile assured me I had hit the right nail on the head ; so I proceeded to address him a homily on the desirability of remaining on good terms with the Governor of the Gulf ports, in his own future interests. I closed with the hope that he had been guilty of no rash remonstrance when tendering to H.E. the tax demanded from him.

'On the contrary, sahib,' replied Rahim Dad, 'the Daria Begi greeted me in a very friendly manner, and praised me highly for the many successful landings he heard I had made for the Afghans this season. To my sorrow, though, sahib, he told me that you were much angered by my humble efforts ; and that your honour had begged him to cast me into prison when next I fell into his hands.'

'Now, Rahim Dad,' interrupted I, 'you are no fool, as you often tell me, so know as well as I do that I was rendering you the best service I could by holding forth on your past iniquities. Would you have been thus welcomed by the Daria Begi had I told him you were now a real friend of the British ?'

'True, sahib; I was but jesting. The wisdom of the British far surpasses that of us poor seafaring men; but it cost me 2000 rupees of my hardly-earned gains, for a time, to win the good opinion of the Daria Begi. Yet was he pleased when I handed over my account and all that sum in silver, humbly praying that another year I might have still more to present to him, if it should please Allah! His honour re-echoed my "inshallah" very heartily; but accepted my offering kindly, inquiring what I now proposed to do, as few Afghans remained about Masquat. I replied that now must I return with speed to Ziarat, for I feared greatly to do aught else this year.'

'And there is no need to tell me,' I chimed in, 'that you had no intention of returning to Ziarat at all, until you had recovered the sum due to you from the Arab broker at Dibai. How did you manage that without rousing the suspicion of the Daria Begi?'

'Well, sahib, the truth is that we "nakhudas," and many of the town people of Bandar Abbas besides, bore the Daria Begi no love for the taxes he had unjustly taken from us. It was arranged with Laris from outside, therefore, that they should attack H.E. when he had collected much of what he robbed from us humble ones. The Laris are a brave, well-armed people, sahib, and ever ready to fight the Shah's soldiers if paid for it. In the name of Allah! it would have warmed your honour's heart to see the Daria Begi besieged in the Government House, and calling on the good loyal citizens of Bandar Abbas to come to his aid.

'Loyal citizens, indeed!' repeated my narrator with scornful emphasis. 'Did he think we were dogs that we should rush to lick the hand which had beaten us without mercy? Ah, well, it was a fine *jang* (war), and the country round was much disturbed; but we carried no arms, so how could we help the Daria Begi? Wherefore we remained frightened within the houses of the town; and before the Laris consented to leave the Daria Begi in peace they demanded a large ransom from him, to be paid over at once. Of this ransom I received but 1000 rupees, sahib!

'Yet was it a great "tamasha." Allah grant that the Daria Begi will not quickly forget his collection of taxes at Bandar Abbas! Protection Tax! I spit upon it. We "nakhudas" have still to learn that truth and honesty abide in this man. Is it not passing strange, sahib, that he who proclaimeth himself Protector of the Poor is not able to protect himself against the wrath of them he treadeth under foot? Often is it thus in our poor country.'

The old sea-dog was lost in silent reverie for some moments. At length he continued, 'When again free, the Daria Begi steamed hastily away for Bushire; and then did I sail for Dibai to gather the money due to me from the Afghans also. Thus no longer am I a poor "nakhuda," sahib, and can live at my ease until your honour returns to Jashk next year; but sore am I at heart that you depart hence.'

'Well, Rahim Dad, it comforteth me much that I do not leave you in want, and that you have settled all matters satisfactorily with your own people, the Afghans, and the Daria Begi. Your work for the British is known only to us three sitting here; and when I am gone see to it that you do not try to deceive B— (my chief agent), who remaineth, and cause him to bring some evil action of thine before my successor. The new sahib arrives to-morrow. I sail by "marn-i-war" the day after for Masqat, and thence for Hindustan. Time passes swiftly, so now we must part. Peace be upon you!'

With a fervent 'Upon you be peace!' in reply and a more than hearty grip of my outstretched hand in his two horny ones, the old man turned, stepped slowly, almost sadly, towards the door, and vanished into the darkness without. I never saw him again.

never saw him at all; excluding one doubtful glimpse in Quarry Woods, I have seen him at Bisham, only a quarter of a mile away (during the floods, bravely climbing a diminutive tree whose base was some feet under water), and on the Buckinghamshire bank opposite to Winter Hill. It is understandable that he should dislike Quarry Woods, for the green woodpecker is no lover of beeches. But he ought to revel in the orchards, especially that magnificent cherry plantation separated from the woods only by a roadway—no longer grassy as it was in '92. The stout cylindrical trunks of the innumerable old fruit trees extend for acres; it is easy to believe that the plantation is one of the biggest of its kind in England.

Hudson described it, of course, as he described everything else that was notable about the village and its surroundings. Except one thing, the view from Winter Hill. It is an uncommon type of view: not at all distant (for no point in sight is much more than five miles away) but beginning almost underfoot and ranging across the Thames and its levels to the wooded Chilterns. And it is by no means bankrupt of bird life; the peregrines which cruised over it one spring morning have already been noticed, and it is hardly possible to stand there long without seeing pairs of hurrying mallards passing down the valley.

While he was at Cookham Dean Hudson stayed at a cottage in the hollow. Even after searching the whole book for clues, his information about it is extremely vague. The old orchards of apple, cherry, and walnut trees are still plentiful enough to make it doubtful which was the precise old grassy orchard which formed the boundary of the nightingale's lane. His cottage was certainly near a field—he confesses to being relieved that the nearest tree made choice of by a song-thrush as a singing stand was on the far side of a field. And it was certainly almost opposite another cottage, in the garden of which the girl on a swing outsang the last nightingale of the summer. It seems to have stood four or five yards back from the lane, for the nightingale which came to the door for crumbs used to sing on the gate at about that distance from Hudson's window, 'where his bright eyes could sweep the lane up and down.'

Among the score or so of cottages which might have been the one where Hudson lodged there is a single ancient creeper-clad little dwelling on the right of the road going up westward, so incomparably the most picturesque in the place that it ought to be selected and canonised, overruling all pedantic considerations of where Hudson actually did stay.

And on its own merits it seems to have the best claim. It stands back, as most of the rest do not, with cottages opposite, and there is a meadow behind it and an orchard down the lane. Moreover, it is in the one part of the village which can be described as being 'in the deepest part of the coombe,' and about two minutes walk from the pleasant green slope with a group of ancient pollard-elm at the foot of it which Hudson mentions (though he leaves out the chalk-pit behind it). At this point I have watched an extraordinary sparrow, who probably spends his life in the village. He is not an albino, but mostly of a very light creamy colour, as if the normal brown plumage had been dusted with flour. At rest he is merely uncommonly pale, but flying in the sun he appears brighter and more dazzling than a milk-white bird.

Up the steep lane towards the woods, only a few yards beyond this place and only a few minutes after seeing the white sparrow, I watched an unscrupulous trick played by a robin on a confiding baker. The baker's boy stopped his cart (which was an open two-wheeled one, with some crusts and bread lying exposed on it) at the gate of a house, and went off down the drive with his basket. As soon as he had shut the gate down pounced a robin out of the ivy, settled on the middle of the horse's back, hopped up on to the cart, and snatched as substantial a meal of bread as he could before the boy came back. By the time that happened he had taken cover again in the ivy, clinging half-hidden so that nothing showed but the blaze of his bright red breast with the sun on it and his determined little head. He did not retreat, though I passed on within a couple of yards of his robber's den.

E. M. NICHOLSON.

TALES FROM THE PERSIAN GULF.

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. H. AUSTIN, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

V. A PROTECTION TAX.

AFTER the digression made to the operations west of Ras Masandam, with which he was not intimately connected, we now return for a final review of Rahim Dad's movements. It has been shown that it was largely owing to the positive information furnished by that stout knave that the S.N.O. was justified in secretly assembling the greater part of the recently arrived mosquito fleet within the recesses of the Clarence Straits. The *coup* this officer had so skilfully planned to meet the new situation was completely successful; and Rahim Dad is, perhaps, entitled to some of the credit by having acquainted me beforehand with the gun-runners' intentions. Still, as he had not been the direct instrument of this haul of arms falling into our hands, he could not fairly expect further reward on that account; but that was a subject for future discussion.

All this time Rahim Dad, Salih, and one or two other 'nakhudas' continued to ply suspiciously between the Persian and Arabian coasts in the Gulf of Oman, carrying merchandise to and fro. I knew their principal object was to attract the attention of the blockading ships thereabouts, in accordance with Rahim Dad's arrangement with the Afghans. But no hint could I give to the naval authorities to pay little regard to these decoys, without imperilling the disclosure of Rahim Dad's secret compact with me. It does not require experience in an Intelligence Department to convince one that the fewer entrusted with secrets the more likely are they to be kept.

Thus it came about that, not long after the capture of the arms near Qishm, a seemingly familiar skipper and his dhow dropped into the clutches of the naval officer commanding the cruiser which had towed Rahim Dad and the nautch party into Jashk earlier in the season. This officer, it may be remembered, had then intended to permit the dancing girls to continue on their way unmolested; but as I had on that occasion suggested they should be brought in to Jashk, he thought it advisable to observe a similar procedure now. Although no arms were found aboard the dhow, his suspicions were

aroused by the 'nakhuda' appearing to court capture, as if in the interests of a third party. The man asserted he knew nothing about the gun-running operations as he had only just arrived from a long sea voyage to Zanzibar and back. He gave his name as Omar Khayyam to the naval officer. When taxed with being Rahim Dad, he admitted cousinship with that individual, and said he was supposed to resemble him very closely in outward appearance, but averred he was very different otherwise.

Such was the gist of the wireless message I received; and it seemed desirable in the circumstances for me to take this opportunity of making the acquaintance of Rahim Dad's lifelike cousin. He and his dhow were accordingly towed in to Jashk, and passed over to me for further examination.

On meeting the stranger from Zanzibar, when the steam pinnace had brought the dhow ashore at Jashk, a single glance sufficed to assure me that its skipper was no other than my old friend Rahim Dad; but there was such an appeal in his eyes as they caught mine that I decided to respect his incognito in the presence of the naval officer. I agreed that this cousin was certainly the living image of his notorious relative, and was not surprised he had been taken for him. Anyhow, I would thrash the matter out more at my leisure. Meanwhile, 'nakhuda' and crew would be lodged in the guard-room. The cruiser then departed to resume her preventive patrol.

When confronted with me later, the suppositious Omar Khayyam—I admired his poetic fancy in pseudonym—cast aside all further attempt at camouflage. He smiled unrestrainedly on being greeted with, 'Well, old maker of tents, what's your special grievance now? I imagine you are anxious to have a word with me, or you would scarcely have been captured by the "marn-i-war" and dragged here under suspicion.'

Yes, that was his main idea; he felt he could not just then detach his dhow from her mission by any other means, without creating comment among his confederates. However, in the first place, he wished to express his admiration for the very successful manner in which the capture of Afghans and arms had been effected in the vicinity of Qishm. He, of course, quite understood that he was entitled to no reward on that score. I rejoiced to learn of his moderation.

Proceeding, he said his trouble was that the Daria Begi had issued orders to all Persian subject 'nakhudas,' who had received

payment from the Afghans during the gun-running season, to submit accounts to him at once of what they had amassed by that means. This declaration was to be accompanied by a sum equal to one-third of that already received, as a *māliāt-i-hifāzat* (Protection Tax)—in the words of the *firman*. Failing compliance, the names of the defaulting 'nakhudas' would be handed over to the British authorities for such drastic action as the latter might desire to take against these Persian arms law-breakers! And Rahim Dad was, of course, one of those who had been served with this notice.

Though sympathising deeply with our colleague in his dilemma, I was not entirely surprised at the step taken by the new Daria Begi. I had judged him, at our interviews some time earlier, to be the type of Governor eager to seize upon any excuse for surreptitiously making something for himself out of the gun-running operations. The blow had now fallen, and Rahim Dad was obviously not best pleased at the iniquity, as he termed it, of the Persian official entrusted from Teheran with the good government of this outlying portion of the Shah's dominions. He was inclined to rebel, and disregard the demand on his hard-earned gains; but I counselled caution, and advised him to 'stump up' lest greater evil might befall him. We could afford him no protection as a subject of the Shah—and a notorious one at that.

That Rahim Dad was pretty certain to 'cook' his accounts was no concern of mine. This was a matter entirely between him, his conscience, and the Daria Begi. Still, the fact that he admitted in his return having received 6000 rupees from the Afghans, in spite of running arms free for them of late, and excluding the commission yet due to him for the Sohar-Sharjah scheme, went to prove the lucrative nature of his calling. Had he not amassed another 3500 rupees or so from the British, too? But the latter item was 'secret and confidential,' and did not, of course, come under the purview of the Daria Begi's *firman*.

In any case, Rahim Dad seemed to consider that he was doing the Daria Begi extremely proud by responding to his monstrous demand with a sum of 2,000 rupees. To make up this amount he requested the payment of the thousand rupees still due to him from me. He then asked my permission to put to sea again, in order to hand over the money in person to the Daria Begi at Bandar Abbas, as directed.

Thus Rahim Dad's account with the British was closed. Before he sailed, however, he again reverted with enthusiasm to the

recent operations off Qishm, much about which he had already learnt from other lips. When I suggested that the capture of the Afghans might render remote his chance of ever seeing the colour of his commissions, he chuckled knowingly. He was no fool, he reminded me, and had arranged for a very astute Arab broker at Dibai to look after his interests in the matter. On the departure of the Daria Begi for Bushire, he would drop in at Dibai, and hoped to pocket another 2000 rupees odd there. His intention then was to 'shut up shop' and enjoy his *otium cum dignitate* at Ziarat for the rest of the season.

He had made his peace with the young Baluchis, who thought that their period of imprisonment at Jashk was well recompensed by the 20 rupees received from him. They had voted him a 'jolly good fellow' and lauded to the skies his many other brilliant successes over the 'thick-headed Anglez.' So spake Rahim Dad. As for the Afghans, we were likely to hear little more of them this year. Few remained on the Arabian side of the Gulf; and those still on Persian soil were making preparations to depart for Afghanistan before the hot weather added to the difficulties of their long journey. All were 'as sick as mud,' he said, at the result of the year's operations, and vowed vengeance against the British; but he, fortunately, was regarded by them with the utmost good-will.

Matters had been very satisfactorily wound up, therefore; and as I, too, was shortly returning to India, I took this opportunity of bidding good-bye to Rahim Dad. It seemed probable that we should not meet again. My relief as Intelligence Officer during the summer months was to leave Simla in a few days to take over; so it was with genuine regret on both sides—I verily believe—that Rahim Dad and I then parted. He certainly had added to the gaieties of guessing, so far as I was concerned, by playing his new part well; and as he had contrived to collect a good many shekels under our aegis, whilst preserving a whole skin, he was not ungrateful, I should say, to the British.

Some days after his departure from Jashk, strange events apparently began to take place at Bandar Abbas. We were not in direct communication by telegraph or otherwise with that port, but picked up wireless messages of an enigmatical character flying between various blockading ships. All we could gather from these was that serious disturbances had broken out in the neighbourhood of Bandar Abbas; and that the British consul there had applied for a cruiser to stand by in case of necessity until the air cleared a

bit. One rather feared that the Afghans might be cutting up rusty, as a final kick at the British before embarking on their toilsome trek to their homes—without the rifles on which they had hoped to derive a big profit. Such an outbreak was well within the bounds of disgruntled and ruined men, as a reprisal for the hideous losses suffered by them this season ; so we awaited further details with some anxiety.

It was no little relief, therefore, to learn from a cruiser, which called in at Jashk a day or two later, that the transport carrying the 'fauj' had been summoned to the spot. The Afghans were not, after all, implicated in the disturbance. This was directed, not against the British consulate, but against H.E. the Daria Begi himself ; and by the local inhabitants. On arrival at Bandar Abbas, H.E. had taken up his residence in the Governor's house, and proceeded to collect the taxes said to be due to the Persian Government. Never a popular performance among Persians, the bleeding process on this occasion appeared to have been much aggravated by the abnormal demands of the new Daria Begi. Those victimised appealed in vain for justice. The Governor was adamant, and their Oriental patience under oppression then gave way, it seemed.

To the astonishment and dismay of the Governor, Government House was attacked one night by the incensed inhabitants, I was informed, of Bandar Abbas. The attack was with difficulty beaten back by the Governor's guard of 'tufangchis' ; but he then had the mortification of finding himself, the representative of the Shah, besieged for some days in the viceregal building. Much firing of rifles was indulged in by both sides, but with no great loss to either. Eventually, after a truly Gilbertian exposition of Persian warfare, the Daria Begi opened negotiations for buying off his assailants. Peace was once more proclaimed by H.E. paying out a considerable sum of money—presumably part of what he had squeezed out of Persian and Baluch during his residence.

It is difficult to picture a farce of this nature taking place anywhere outside Persia ; and when made aware of some of the details, my mind immediately turned to my old friend Rahim Dad, bound for Bandar Abbas after our last meeting. I was prepared to wager that he was not altogether innocent of complicity in the outrage, since he felt very sore at having to hand over so large a sum as 2000 rupees to the Daria Begi. At the same time it was my earnest hope that the old rascal had played his cards with caution ;

for to fall into the bad books of H.E. would probably prove fatal to his, and perhaps dull our, future prospects anent gun-running in the Gulf.

I need have suffered no qualms on that score. A day or two before my departure from Jashk for Simla, I was aroused from my midnight slumbers by my chief agent, who whispered, to my surprise, that Rahim Dad was without, and would like once again to bid me good-bye, if I did not resent the intrusion. In truth, I was pleased at the old man's friendly attitude, as thus evinced. There was nothing more to be got out of me now ; and I had really acquired a rough form of affection for the rogue. He, at least, had never let me down after vowing eternal gratitude for being permitted to work out his salvation on the British side. I felt, too, there was something yet to learn regarding recent events at Bandar Abbas ; so I bade my agent tell the old schemer I would gladly see him.

Without any conceit, I fancied I detected an air of depression in Rahim Dad's demeanour when ushered into my apartment to make his farewell bow ; so, to turn his thoughts into more cheerful channels for the moment, I began by congratulating him on having recovered some of the 2000 rupees he had been forced to pay over to the Daria Begi.

Although apparently astonished at my assumption, his responsive smile assured me I had hit the right nail on the head ; so I proceeded to address him a homily on the desirability of remaining on good terms with the Governor of the Gulf ports, in his own future interests. I closed with the hope that he had been guilty of no rash remonstrance when tendering to H.E. the tax demanded from him.

'On the contrary, sahib,' replied Rahim Dad, 'the Daria Begi greeted me in a very friendly manner, and praised me highly for the many successful landings he heard I had made for the Afghans this season. To my sorrow, though, sahib, he told me that you were much angered by my humble efforts ; and that your honour had begged him to cast me into prison when next I fell into his hands.'

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'True, sahib; I was but jesting. The wisdom of the British far surpasses that of us poor seafaring men; but it cost me 2000 rupees of my hardly-earned gains, for a time, to win the good opinion of the Daria Begi. Yet was he pleased when I handed over my account and all that sum in silver, humbly praying that another year I might have still more to present to him, if it should please Allah! His honour re-echoed my "inshallah" very heartily; but accepted my offering kindly, inquiring what I now proposed to do, as few Afghans remained about Masquat. I replied that now must I return with speed to Ziarat, for I feared greatly to do aught else this year.'

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'Well, sahib, the truth is that we "nakhudas," and many of the town people of Bandar Abbas besides, bore the Daria Begi no love for the taxes he had unjustly taken from us. It was arranged with Laris from outside, therefore, that they should attack H.E. when he had collected much of what he robbed from us humble ones. The Laris are a brave, well-armed people, sahib, and ever ready to fight the Shah's soldiers if paid for it. In the name of Allah! it would have warmed your honour's heart to see the Daria Begi besieged in the Government House, and calling on the good loyal citizens of Bandar Abbas to come to his aid.

'Loyal citizens, indeed!' repeated my narrator with scornful emphasis. 'Did he think we were dogs that we should rush to lick the hand which had beaten us without mercy? Ah, well, it was a fine *jang* (war), and the country round was much disturbed; but we carried no arms, so how could we help the Daria Begi? Wherefore we remained frightened within the houses of the town; and before the Laris consented to leave the Daria Begi in peace they demanded a large ransom from him, to be paid over at once. Of this ransom I received but 1000 rupees, sahib!

'Yet was it a great "tamasha." Allah grant that the Daria Begi will not quickly forget his collection of taxes at Bandar Abbas! Protection Tax! I spit upon it. We "nakhudas" have still to learn that truth and honesty abide in this man. Is it not passing strange, sahib, that he who proclaimeth himself Protector of the Poor is not able to protect himself against the wrath of them he treadeth under foot? Often is it thus in our poor country.'

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'Well, Rahim Dad, it comforteth me much that I do not leave you in want, and that you have settled all matters satisfactorily with your own people, the Afghans, and the Daria Begi. Your work for the British is known only to us three sitting here; and when I am gone see to it that you do not try to deceive B— (my chief agent), who remaineth, and cause him to bring some evil action of thine before my successor. The new sahib arrives to-morrow. I sail by "marn-i-war" the day after for Masqat, and thence for Hindustan. Time passes swiftly, so now we must part. Peace be upon you!'

With a fervent 'Upon you be peace!' in reply and a more than hearty grip of my outstretched hand in his two horny ones, the old man turned, stepped slowly, almost sadly, towards the door, and vanished into the darkness without. I never saw him again.

LONDON IN 1836.

AN EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF FRANZ GRILLPARZER.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, Austria's greatest dramatic poet, was born in Vienna on January 15, 1791. His father was a struggling barrister who died financially embarrassed in 1809, his heart broken by the Austrian defeat at Wagram. Franz was only eighteen at the time, in the final year of his legal studies, and on his shoulders fell a large share of the responsibility for the maintenance of his mother and three younger brothers. He obtained an appointment first as a private tutor, and subsequently, in 1813, in the civil service, rising slowly, after many disappointments, to the position of keeper of the archives in one of the financial departments.

At an early age Grillparzer showed signs of great poetic talent. He completed a long tragedy entitled *Blanka von Kastilien*, in the style of Schiller's *Don Carlos*, between 1807 and 1809, and in January 1817 the first performance of his 'fate-tragedy,' *Die Ahnfrau*, was a striking success. Then followed a series of great plays, *Sappho* (1818), *Das Goldene Vlies* (1820), *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (1825), *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* (1828), *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (1831), and *Der Traum ein Leben* (1834), which give Grillparzer a place in German literature hardly, if at all, inferior to that of Goethe and Schiller. But the rewards of fame were spoiled for him by his own melancholy temperament, the misfortunes of his family, and by the censorship and other political irritations of the Metternich regime. In 1817 his youngest brother Adolf drowned himself in the Danube. In 1819 his mother, who was ill and depressed in spirits, died suddenly in circumstances which indicated suicide. These tragic events cast a deep shadow over the poet's life. Although he inherited a larger share of his father's common sense than his unsteady brothers, he was often tormented by the fear that his own mind might give way. He was always hyper-sensitive and self-centred, resentful of criticism, and yet conscious of his own unreasonable demands on society and the world in general. In 1819, after his mother's death, he sought relief from sorrow and ill-health in a journey to Italy; in 1826, after alternate quarrels and reconciliations with Kathi Fröhlich, to whom he was for some time engaged, he turned to Germany for relief and visited Goethe in Weimar; and in 1836 he visited Paris

and London, partly for the sake of seeing these famous capitals, partly, as he says himself, 'to breathe the more freely.' On his return to Vienna in June 1836 he was met with the news that his brother Karl had abandoned his family, stolen his employer's money, and, in a fit of insanity, accused himself of murder.

This misfortune was followed by another of a different kind. On March 6, 1838, his solitary comedy, *Weh' dem, der lügt*, was performed for the first time and proved a total failure. This disappointment killed his belief in the opinion of the theatre-going public, and he resolved to produce nothing more on the stage. Three plays, *Libussa*, *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*, and *Die Jüdin von Toledo*, were subsequently completed but remained unpublished until his death in 1872. For over thirty years he withdrew himself from the public, his early plays were not reprinted and only rarely performed, and the honours bestowed on him in his declining years came too late.

The interest of the present translation lies mainly in its description of London and of English institutions. Grillparzer recorded his observations solely for his own satisfaction. The style is crabbed and impatient, the sense often obscure, while the constant references to his health and spirits were not, of course, intended for publication. It is therefore unfair to introduce a great writer in these pages merely as the compiler of a somewhat querulous diary, and the reader may turn to a better source for a true estimate of Grillparzer's poetic worth. Writing in his diary under the date January 12, 1821, Byron says, 'Read the Italian translation by Guido Sorelli of the German Grillparzer—a devil of a name, to be sure, for posterity; but they *must* learn to pronounce it. . . . The tragedy of Sappho is superb and sublime! There is no denying it. The man has done a great thing in writing that play. And *who is he?* I know him not; but *ages will*. 'Tis a high intellect. . . . Grillparzer is grand—antique—not so simple as the ancients but very simple for a modern—too Madame de Staël*ish* now and then—but altogether a great and goodly writer.'

. . . Boulogne at last. At the previous stage a man shouted in English into the coach that a packet would leave the same night for London direct. This suddenly changed all my resolutions. Should I stay in Boulogne for half a day and a night, then cross to Dover, sleep again there and take God knows how long trundling to London? I preferred the twelve hour passage by sea. Alighted

at the Hôtel de l'Univers in Boulogne. Fairly good mid-day meal. Went at once to the harbour to make arrangements for the crossing. Instead of one steamer, there were two. I chose the dearer one, for I thought the other would be too crowded. And so it was. Fearing sea-sickness, I was unwilling to go into a cabin, so I took a second-class ticket, and as all the berths had been taken by ladies, that meant travelling on deck. Took a short walk on the pier and watched the sun set in the sea.

Got back at last to the inn. Found a Frenchman and an English-woman there who were going to cross by the same steamer. We put our luggage together and went back to the harbour, which had grown dark in the meantime and rang with the noise of embarkation. The porter looked after the luggage and we went on board. I chose a place on deck, which I determined not to leave all night. A good seat in the middle of the vessel, where there must be least motion. Wrapped myself in my cloak and awaited those things which might come to pass. The night grows darker and darker. Great stars in the sky. The ship's bell rings, the ropes rattle. The tide is at the flood and the ship begins to move. Thicker and thicker smoke belches from the funnel. We are under way. The *Emerald*, so the ship is called, moves slowly past the five-shilling steamer, *Sovereign*. The deck of the latter is crowded with passengers, who shout farewells to us. We draw near to the mouth of the harbour. We reach the open sea. My inwards behaved themselves tolerably, although the waves were ruffled by a fairly strong wind, which was also very cold, so that I pulled my cloak up to my eyes. The passengers disappeared into the cabins, where they may have been sick or not. In the end I remained alone with the helmsman, who hummed a tune, and the captain, who walked up and down all night. Only rarely did the beginnings of sleep come over me, but I quickly started up again, feeling a sickness each time, which fortunately soon passed away. At last the dark sea grew pale; in the east the sky grew red behind masses of clouds, but the wind increased. It was bitterly cold. The English coast appeared upon the left. Day came. Before this ships of all sorts, indistinguishable in the darkness, had passed us, and now the numbers grew. Fishing-boats, merchantmen, three-masters. Soon there was no point of the horizon without some indication of the presence of a vessel. The travellers came on deck again, with queer, sleepless faces. The motion of the ship became more gentle, the waters of the Thames making themselves felt. At last we

turned into the river. Both banks became visible. A few guardships, cargo-boats at anchor. The coast rather bare. Then we saw houses close together, no longer separated by any interval from London. In the stream a forest of coal-boats at anchor. The town began. Magnificent detached buildings amongst insignificant houses; shipyards, docks. Another fleet of merchant-vessels at anchor. Then towers and columns, and houses right and left. Bridges in front of us, on the right the Tower. We approached the land; it was the Custom House beside London Bridge. . . .

Wednesday, the 18th May.— . . . In the evening I went to the theatre. They gave three pieces, comedies. I cannot remember what the first was. The second, *Etiquette*, or something of the sort, was very well done. Much better than it could have been done in Germany, or even in Paris, where nothing flourishes except the boulevard farce, unequalled in its way, of course. There is something solid, self-reliant, manly about the English actors that has an extraordinarily good effect. . . . Not knowing the customs here, I had not provided myself with a programme, and so I did not know who the actors were who pleased me so well. Understanding little of the words, I grew weary at length and went away about eleven o'clock and found my way home after a deal of trouble. One of the actors, Mr. Farren, I remember, in the *Scapegoat*, or whatever the piece was called, acted the old preceptor inimitably.

No, I am wrong, I have just found the theatre programme and I see that on the first night I saw *Fidelio* with Madame Malibran, *Scapegoat*, and the opera, *Masaniello*. The three comedies were on the 19th at Covent Garden, when I could not get a seat at Drury Lane for *Wild Oats* and *Heart of Midlothian*.

Now for Madame Malibran. Owing to the late dinner hour I arrived too late for the beginning and therefore missed the first act. From the very start I found that famous singer far below her reputation. However, she sings in English here, which may have an unfavourable effect on her rendering, although she speaks English very well. The great *aria* in the second act was excellent. The runs did not always seem so smooth as with the other great Italian singers, often even rather erratic, and the high notes often suffered, that is, the whole of the higher octave, though she takes the highest notes with great ease. Her low register is still excellent. She has evidently a mania for acting and consequently runs about the stage so much that her notes must necessarily suffer. As she is never still for a moment this perpetual obtrusion of herself become

quite a nuisance. But that just suits the people here. In the third act, at the grave, she digs like a navvy, so that the perspiration stands on her forehead, and of course singing is out of the question. I have rarely heard the prison duet worse sung; her middle notes were inaudible. The public here, knowing absolutely nothing about music, admires precisely this kind of performance, and while she was digging, and when she thrust the pistol right into the governor's mouth and would not release her hold of him, there was endless applause. Of the rest, Mr. Templeton (Florestan) had a good voice, an incisive, at times harsh delivery—otherwise praiseworthy. Mr. Giubelei (Pizarro), a beautiful voice, furious delivery. Mr. Seguin (Rocco) so, so. Durusel (Jaquino) the most intolerable clown, but very popular here. The chorus varied from moderate to bad.

Thursday, 19th May.— . . After dinner to Drury Lane, where I did not get a seat, so I went to Covent Garden. It was here I saw the three comedies of which I have forgotten the names. The Covent Garden Theatre is white and gold, not in the best taste and not more than thirty times as fine as the finest theatre in Vienna. Drury Lane, on the other hand, is crimson with dignified gilt ornamentation. The most magnificent thing imaginable. Even the Grand Opera House in Paris is inferior, I think. The design of the latter is more pleasing, but the impression here more majestic. And then society in the dress-circle boxes, like a House of Lords in session, imposing, sublime. The pit, though it costs almost two gulden, is rather spoiled by the far too free and easy behaviour of the public. Whoever feels inclined, keeps his hat on. And then, when the half-price people come in, they all sit down where there is no room and seem to be as anxious as possible to annoy their neighbours.

The half-price arrangement altogether spoils the theatres here. In order not to expose the best to the attentions of the half-price public, the good pieces are given first, at a time when society is still at dinner. When the decent people reach the theatre they see at most the end of the better piece, and for the rest of the evening the wretched stuff which, for the sake of the half-price mob, constitutes the remainder of the entertainment. Moreover, the management of the theatres is sordid and greedy. Unlimited tickets are sold—even for the boxes, where only a limited number can be seated. Late comers storm the boxes, climb over the seats from behind, and thrust themselves into seats that are already full. The

doors of the boxes are left open, and I had to leave a performance of *Julius Caesar* in which Kemble was playing, in the fourth act, simply because I was unwilling to pay for the end with a cold.

Friday, the 20th.— . . In the evening to Drury Lane. Madame Malibran and *Somnambula*. I saw to-day what this woman can do as a singer in spite of the mania for acting I recently mentioned, which did not allow her to keep still for a single moment. To-day her voice was pure, adequate, beautiful in the low register, responsive to every embellishment, faithful to the expression of feeling from the faintest, yet ever audible, note to the fury of a shriek, which is nevertheless always musical with her. She is a truly great singer. The rest also sang pretty well. Mr. Templeton was very good at times, but there is something nautical in his manner.

Saturday, the 21st.— . . In the evening there was a concert in Drury Lane Theatre. Mostly Handel's music. Selections from five or six oratorios. The stage very well arranged. In front, by the balustrade, soprano and alto (the latter sung by men), then behind, in tiers running up the wings, tenor and bass. At the back, the orchestra in concentric circles. The few wind instruments at the back and in a line with the male voices. The music is rendered entirely without, or with only very little, reinforcement from wind instruments, just as Handel wrote it. I think the effect is much better. The choruses very good, probably owing to frequent rehearsal. The solo voices were also good at first. Then they took things more easily, and it was so bad I could have stopped my ears. That did not prevent the most extravagant applause. Madame Malibran sang a few trifling things, playing her own accompaniment on the piano—and very well too. She is a fascinating woman.

I had almost forgotten. The stage background is treated as a Gothic hall, with painted figures of musicians; so natural that it gives a wonderful impression of an infinite orchestra. There is even a painted organ.

Sunday, the 22nd.—Took a trip to Richmond with five or six Germans, Norwegians and Danes who live in my house. Left at eleven o'clock by steamer, passing through blocks of houses and bridges into the open. The country was at first featureless, then more pleasant. Countless country houses and parks to right and left. The journey lasted a good two hours and a half. At last we reached Richmond. Ordered dinner in a very modest inn and went for a walk. The situation magnificent, the view as enchanting as it can be in a district that lacks mountains but not water. On

foot to Hampton Court, a royal palace. There are some cartoons by Raphael there which I wished to see, and the others went with me. When we arrived they were expecting the Prince of Orange, and nobody was admitted. Cursed the Prince of Orange and was glad he lost Belgium. Cannot these leisured folk take their amusements on the working-days of those who have something to do? Saw the gardens. Very beautiful and all laid out when the rest of Europe was still deep in the hair-bag period. Back to Richmond. Had the finest dinner I can remember in my life. A piece of roast veal, as though cut from an elephant, soft and juicy as a chicken. Excellent pies. Cheese, salad—to be eaten raw, which I did not attempt. Porter, ale, such as I never had. Half-a-crown a head. I should have said that the walk to Hampton Court was after dinner. In the evening tea and then back to town on the outside of a coach for the first time, i.e. on the roof. Excellent horses. We were prevented from galloping by an Englishman, who shouted from the inside at the top of his voice, and at last got down from fear. It was quite dark when we arrived.

Monday the 23rd.—A half-holiday, being the old Pentecost, called White Monday here. Went to Westminster Abbey, which is open to the public to-day, i.e. on payment. Magnificent interior. In the style of Notre Dame, but finer; should be compared rather with St. Denis. Inspected all the chapels, all the monuments; the first shown by a guide, the second seen at my ease. Scarcely a single one of these monuments can be called beautiful, but all together what an impression they make! And it is not all dead, like German history, but lives in the life of to-day, in existing institutions. Truly this country has a history, we have only curiosities and incidents. Shakespeare's monument was one of the worst.

In the evening Macready played *Macbeth*. I went, but the holiday crowd was there and made such a noise that I could not understand a single word. The witches done by men. Their scenes were sung and for this purpose whole choruses of male and female witches were employed. The resulting nonsense disturbed nobody. Otherwise the setting was good. The scene with Banquo's ghost otherwise than with us. The king sits apart from his guests, on a throne in the middle of the stage. When he rises Banquo enters in his ordinary clothes from the wings and sits down. This makes all the less impression, as the spectators have not seen his death, the murder having been done behind the scenes. Who will guarantee that he is really a dead man? The second time he comes

in from the opposite side, and his appearance is then most effective, because we know from Macbeth's previous demeanour with what kind of a guest we have to do. I should be quite in favour of the performance here if Banquo's murder took place before the eyes of the spectator.

Tuesday, the 24th.— . . St. Paul's Cathedral: a building in more modern taste, magnificent, enormous, but making no particular impression within or without. Filled with monuments, mostly better than in Westminster Abbey.

In the evening to Drury Lane: *Richard III.* A new actor in the title-rôle. Not bad, but not impressive. Furious scenes in the audience. Downright conversations between gallery and pit. 'That fellow in the black coat was hissing,' said the man next to me. 'Let him be gone!' The best was the little Duke of York, very nicely played by a little girl. The costumes without any individual fidelity, the supers wretched. All the more magnificence squandered on the second piece, *The Jewess*, a paraphrase of the French opera of the same name. Troops of men in armour march on. A special gangway had been erected for them round the orchestra, and it had already interfered with the view of the stage during Shakespeare's *Richard*. In spite of every effort, only a pale reflection of the tasteful display in the Paris Opera House. Had enough of the thing in the second act.

Wednesday, the 25th.—Decided to see the tunnel. Drove to the Bank in the omnibus and tried to find my way from there, as I did not know that special buses go direct. Had planned a mighty walk on the left bank of the river. I did not venture into the unknown regions of the right bank. At last, with great difficulty, found Wapping Stairs and was ferried across. Entrance. A colossal steam-engine receives the visitor. Then down a wooden staircase and the mighty work is visible, made as bright as day by gas lamps. You hear a dull rumbling, caused either by the flowing river or probably by the steam-engine as it works. Tunnel-vaults flattened at the bottom. They go on for a great distance, though they have not yet reached the middle of the river. One can wish the work every progress and yet doubt its completion. Wrote my name in the book, and then back across the river. Extremely tired, got into an omnibus at the Bank, and so home. . . .

Thursday, the 26th.—The Tower below my expectation. The exterior impressive. The inside costs seven shillings and is not worth seven pence. Armour, weapons. The Crown Jewels magnificent beyond description, especially the Crown, which by itself is

probably worth more than the kingdom of Dalmatia. I was alone, and for that reason the custodian, who went before me in an old-fashioned dress, with a sword in his hand, tried to keep as many of the sights from me as possible, nor did I particularly care to see any more old lumber. . . .

In the evening to the English Opera House. *The Middy Ashore*. Mrs. Keeley, the midshipman, very good, likewise Mr. Salter as boatman. After that *The Yeoman's Daughter*, a tearful drama, but very well done. The same Mistress Keeley who had done the midshipman, a jolly young man, in the first piece, now appeared as the sentimental yeoman's daughter, but so excellent, so womanly, so tender and angelically kind that I have rarely been so favourably impressed. Mr. Serle, her lover, equally good. The yeoman, Mr. Williams; the constable, Mr. Salter; the rat-catcher, Mr. Romer, all excellent.

The Man about Town was particularly delightful owing to the splendid acting of a Mr. Wrench in the title-rôle.

Friday, the 27th.—Went to the Zoological Garden, Regent's Park. When I reached the entrance they refused to admit me, as the authorisation of one of the directors is necessary. This had never occurred to me, as they charge a shilling. As I stood there not knowing what to do, a gentleman came along with a lady on his arm, signed a ticket, gave it to me, signed another in case I might like to come again, and then made use of his right as one of the directors to admit me free, so that I had my money and two tickets besides in my pocket. He spoke French and at first showed me everything, but the crowd soon parted us. This sort of active kindness is only to be found in England. I wandered through the beautiful garden and saw the menagerie, which has not its equal in the world. And all done by private subscription. . . . I enjoyed to the full the beautiful garden, the warm sun, and the sight of the marvellous beasts. Two elephants, one an East Indian elephant of the largest kind. A rhinoceros, four—I say, *four*—giraffes, and many more that I cannot remember.

In the evening to the Haymarket Theatre: *The Housekeeper*. Miss Taylor, excellent. A Mr. Vining, playing both Mr. Korn and A Man. He was equally good in both, she was rather weaker perhaps in the second piece, *Atonement*. A brother of the former, J. Vining, most delightful in the part of the dandy, Captain Popinjay. Everything else good. The comedy has reached a high degree of perfection in England.

Monday, the 30th.— . . Went to see a few art exhibitions.

First to the National Gallery, Pall Mall, which I had difficulty in finding at first, so unknown was it to everybody I asked. At last in an engraver's shop, I got the right direction. It is only temporarily housed in the present premises, and the building is therefore nothing in particular. To tell the truth, I did not much care for the collection. Great names, it seemed to me, and moderate pictures. I was inclined to doubt the genuineness of the Claude Lorrains, but a good Norwegian painter assured me of the contrary and said they were very good. Perhaps he was right, and my ignorance or my ill-humour was at fault. I also thought the Correggios very queer. I am no connoisseur, but otherwise I have a fairly accurate feeling for art. But of course everybody thinks he has. The Wilkies obvious to everybody and undoubtedly excellent. Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode*—the original—and of course far surpassing the engravings in expression. I would not give much for the Wests. Rembrandt's *Woman taken in Adultery*—composition and illumination excellent, otherwise rather vulgar. Rubens, as everywhere, etc.

Then to the British Institution; an exhibition by private owners from their collections. My heart warmed with satisfaction. Just as in the Vatican Gallery, there is no need to plough one's way through filth and mediocrity. Not many pictures, but all good. Murillos which place the artist in the first rank. Velasquez, severe and solemn. Dutch pictures, as fresh as though painted yesterday. I could hardly leave Titian's *Four Generations*. I did not care for Poussin's *Seven Sacraments*. The Claude Lorrains here satisfied me at once. Two landscapes by Ruysdael, the most beautiful things imaginable. Head of Mary Magdalene by Guido, of unsurpassably tender beauty, especially the mouth. A Holy Family by Raphael—either not by him at all, or painted at a time when he was no longer Raphael.

I had arranged to dine in a tavern with my new friend at half-past four, as Charles Kemble was to appear in *Julius Caesar*, and it was advisable to be in the theatre by six o'clock, when people in boarding-houses are just sitting down to dinner. Went therefore to the Strand, found the company, and we dined together, half-a-crown per head. For that we got soup (real turtle), a very good fish, roast beef, cut as you pleased from a mighty joint, and cheese. . . . Then to the theatre. Dr. Bulwering insisted on going into the pit, but we found an enormous crowd already there, pushing and squeezing in English fashion, i.e. like wild beasts. After being once or twice in danger of being crushed to death, I left my

companion and took a seat in a box, where I was fairly comfortable at first. The performance was good. Sheridan Knowles, as Brutus, nothing out of the ordinary: Cassius (Macready) praiseworthy. Kemble, who played Antony, excellent in the scene after Caesar's death and magnificent in the funeral oration. The mob scene much better done than similar things with us. I should have liked to see the whole of it, but when the half-price people came in at nine o'clock, the theatre was literally stormed. The doors of the boxes were torn open. Cold air blew keenly into the warm theatre. There was no possibility of expelling the invaders. They climbed on the benches behind the backs of those who had seats. There was a babel of conversation, even scuffles. So I said good-bye to Shakespeare in the fourth act, tore my way through the crowd, and reached my lodging like a hunted deer.

Tuesday, the 31st May.— . . . Went on the railway to Deptford. It is supported the whole way by lofty arches. Thirty to forty coaches coupled together stand ready for the locomotive which is to move them. You get in. A snorting sound at last announces the return of the monster. It is yoked to. It pounds and roars, the movement is slow at first, then quicker and quicker, until the whole train thunders along at about the speed of a bird. You notice the speed more by the objects as they fly past, rather than by feeling any effect as you sit in the carriage. Deptford is reached in six minutes, about two and a half miles. Thence we went to Greenwich. Magnificent park. Fine view. The Pensioners' Hospital finer than a royal castle. The chapel splendid, inspiring, with portraits of famous admirals and pictures of great sea-fights. . . .

In the evening went to the Italian Opera, *Gazza Ladra*. Rubini, as usual, not the man for me. Tamburini excellent. Lablache has gone off somewhat, apart from the fact that the Podesta was never really his part. Grisi, excellent voice, great fluency, sometimes misused. Likes to sing too high, which sounds horrible to me. She has no great moments, either in acting or singing, as far as my observation goes. The theatre beautiful, immense, the most distinguished society in full evening dress. . . .

Wednesday, June 1st.—Went to the British Museum, which had been closed during the whole of my stay so far. Decided to see the antiques only and leave the Natural History section for a future visit. . . . O the immortal Greeks! Next to them are ponderous Egyptian objects along with Indian monstrosities. Then at last the Elgin marbles. Everything damaged, but showing traces of

a beauty which no steam-engine can repair and for which the best modern products are no equivalent. The group of the three Fates, the metopes, the friezes. The works of gods, not giants. What did it all represent? The imagination wearies in trying to reconstruct it. . . .

Thursday, the 2nd.— . . . After dinner to Parliament. Had to wait two hours to get into the Strangers' Gallery for our half-crowns. A statement of mine that I could in any case ask the poet Bulwer to come out and procure us admittance induced the elder Figdor to speak to the constable in that sense, and behold, all at once, Mr. Bulwer comes up to me, which was very disconcerting, as I had only said it as a joke. I made my request to the very handsome gentleman, as I had to say something. Naturally, he did not seem quite *au fait* with my name and business, behaved rather cavalierly, assured me the crowd was too great to-day, but if I would come to-morrow at five o'clock. . . . A mere figure of speech. I was very glad when he went away.

The building is only provisional, and makes at first a very insignificant impression, which soon changes to one of grandeur. A long narrow hall with tiers of seats on both sides. The speakers at the end. No decoration. Galleries all round, those down the side for the repose of the members, where they lie and loll about most vulgarly, with their feet on the balustrade. Opposite the Speaker is the Strangers' Gallery, so far away that one can hear only with difficulty. On account of the chandelier, only one side of the House was visible. We sat on the right, and therefore in full view of the ministerial side. O'Connell was entirely in black, with a little projecting frill. A well-built man with black hair, a roll of paper in his hand, which he held to his mouth like a clarinet while his opponents were speaking. I could not distinguish his features. He sat in the second row. Shiel was almost immediately in front of him in the first row. Lean, fair, brisk. As we entered, Lord Morpeth, the Secretary for Ireland, was speaking. Strong and energetic, interrupted by the 'Hear, Hear' of his own party and the 'Oh, Oh' and 'Ay, Ay' of the opposition. Then Sir James Graham. Jerky at first, without fluency, then with continuity, more in a conversational than an oratorical tone, raising his voice only during his frequent prophecies of disaster. Then the groans and 'Ays' were more frequent, often lasting five minutes, as though the two parties were trying to outdo one another. This lasted about two hours, I suppose. At last Shiel rose. His voice is like a two-edged sword, unpleasant all along; himself a flash of fire.

The vivacity of his gestures, the modulation of his voice, the bitterness of his scorn, and the thunder of his maledictions were indescribable. Only variations of oft-repeated themes, of course. There was also a good deal I could not understand owing to the distance, the rapidity of utterance, especially Shiel's, and my small ability to understand spoken English. Yet it made a great impression. The flow of his eloquence seemed to be more artificial than natural, but this did not destroy the general impression. The English need not worry. Perhaps they do not know other nations well enough to realise how omnipotent they are. Once they really make up their minds everything will crumble before them, as Napoleon himself crumbled. The world is secure. When Shiel had finished there was no need to terminate the sitting; they all dispersed. I got home at half-past one.

Friday, June 3rd.— . . . Went to the House of Commons again in the evening. Was admitted after waiting an hour. Mr. Ward was just speaking, one of the ministers, I think. Rather tedious. Then a Conservative rose, How-Vane, or something of the sort. He talked the same old stuff. Was interrupted, mocked, took offence, claimed the right to express his opinion. Sudden commotion, everybody crowded and pressed, the spectators stood up. O'Connell began to speak. If ever any man combined all the external marks of an orator, it is he. Powerful frame, deep, resonant voice, easy and appropriate gestures, equally effective both in scorn and in earnest. What he said was hardly new, at least what I understood of it. Nor was the flow of his speech always uninterrupted; not as uninterrupted as Shiel's fiery eloquence. The noise and applause were endless. He vomited abuse on individuals, so that the Speaker had to call him to order. At every moment his party interrupted him with shouts and cheers, so that he could hardly deliver a complete sentence. The Irish seem to be excellent declaimers. The English are good orators—speakers, I should rather say. A combination of the two would produce a good orator. At the close of his speech there was great commotion among the members, the cause of which I could not discover. Perhaps they were going to vote already. Suddenly a calm clear voice was heard; it was Sir Robert Peel. But my strength was exhausted. I could not sit any longer. I had been crushed and crowded from seven o'clock until one, with nothing on which to fix my attention consistently, exhausted by the effort of listening to a language which I could only half understand. I left and slept like a corpse until nine o'clock next morning.

Monday, June 6th.—After dinner to Drury Lane. *The Maid of Artois*, original English opera by Balfe. Some pretty things. The whole tedious and confused. Madame Malibran, better than ever. One of her airs a pretty duet. Best of all a kind of waltz, which is a most unsuitable conclusion for the piece, but which she sang to perfection. Her easy change from high to low notes in the quickest tempo, her exquisite taste in the transition to the recurring initial melody, her exaltation, her deep feeling. Pasta has no doubt more depth and grandeur, but Malibran is infinitely more varied, a freer genius. In the upward passages there is often a suspicion of unevenness; she certainly has not Fodor's perfect accuracy, there is often a flat note in the transition from high to low, her continued trill is not as sure nor as melodious as that of her great rivals, but altogether she is certainly not inferior to the best, and as a stage singer in the widest sense she surpasses them all. . . .

Tuesday, June 7th.— . . . In the evening I went to the Italian Theatre in spite of the rain. *L'Assedio di Corinto*. I have been unfair to Grisi hitherto. She is as good a singer as there ever was. Not strongly passionate, but in compensation always melodious. At first, the same tendency to sing too high as when I heard her the first time. Later on, all went well. I have often *seen* this opera, but to-day I *heard* it for the first time. Her voice has an ease and charm such as few prima donnas possess. They are mostly past their best by the time they reach the final stages of their art. The chorus was bad. Of the rest Tamburini does not please me particularly, and Rubini not at all. Lablache is no longer equal to the priest's part, which was always too low for him, and is now particularly so when his voice is greatly failing. But the combined effect, of course, was excellent. The staging more trivial than in Paris.

Thursday, June 9th.—Went early with Figdor and another German merchant to St. Paul's, which was arranged in endless tiers for the Children's Festival. All round under the enormous dome, and round what we call the Presbyterium, were the rising tiers of seats—I counted sixteen one above the other—with room for eight thousand children. In the middle a pulpit, at the back the organ. The congregation numbered about fourteen thousand all told. The spectators were soon there, going back as far as the eye could see—nothing to compare with it outside St. Peter's in Rome. Gradually the children appeared, dressed in different colours according to parishes. The boys looked very odd, but the girls, although in old women's costumes, were an attractive sight on account of

the extraordinary cleanliness of their bonnets, pinafores, and pilgrim collars, all dazzling white. Blue, green, red in all shades, black, brown, grey; girls from the bottom upwards, boys from the top downwards. When all the eight thousand were together it was an incomparable sight. Towards the organ a fan of girls, snow-white, framed in darker colours, just like a glory of angels. The rest sat in horizontal divisions. The girls in white were the snow region of an inverted human mountain. Here and there the straight line was picturesquely broken on the upper side by the tip of a bonnet or pinafore. Tedious prayers, interrupted by choruses in the soprano key, which the eight thousand children sang like thunder. The rather difficult things went better than I expected. The Protestant Archbishop of *all* Ireland (all Ireland, God damn him!) preached a sermon which he may have understood himself. The hundred and thirteenth psalm, very well composed. An Alleluia by Handel, which was too much for the children. At last, after two hours and a half, a not unwelcome end. We had actually endured five hours, as we were there at ten. . . .

I was astonished at the good order in St. Paul's. The only disturbing element was the military nature of certain performances, but this could hardly be otherwise. For instance, at certain points in the prayers, the children covered their eyes with their hands and pinafores in unison, which looked rather hypocritical, high-church-like. Princess Victoria was there with her mother and the Prince of Orange. She sat at first down below, among the children. But when the people climbed on the pews to look at her, disregarding the stewards, who incessantly poked those at the top with their staves and admonished them to behave decently, she left her place and took a seat in the choir. The girls sitting there then turned their faces in her direction and kept on bowing to her in unison, so that it all looked like the waves of the sea. All at once, in the middle of the prayers, it occurred to a few schoolboys to shout 'Hooray,' and the whole army of children joined in, to the obvious dissatisfaction of the Archbishop of Armagh, a High Tory Lord Beresford. . . .

Friday, the 10th.— . . Resolved to try to get into the House of Lords to-day with my ticket for last Monday. Went first to Humelauer, secretary to the Embassy, and found him in on this occasion. Clearly a clever fellow, but perhaps too convinced of it himself. . . . He agrees with me about the mendacity of the Whigs and Tories. Neither party is bold enough to say what it wants. That is why their speeches are so empty and they both

so easily make themselves ridiculous because their rational opinion is never expressed. He thinks the Radicals alone possess good sense and talent. He thinks a democratic revolution, with State bankruptcy, etc. is inevitable. I do not believe it myself, as it would only be possible if the moderate Tories continued to hold themselves aloof from the Whigs, and thus force the latter to seek a majority with the Radicals. But even then it will not happen. The Tories are much more likely to return to power. The spirit of the masses is evidently monarchical.

I reached the House of Lords at half-past two and sought admission as a stranger who must shortly leave London and had been prevented by indisposition from making use of his ticket at the proper time. Was told to come back at half-past four, as the door-keeper was not there. . . . Was happily admitted to the House of Lords. The room small, decorated in bright red. The throne at the end, with the Lord Chancellor's Woolsack twelve paces in front. The bishops, though in opposition, seated on the right-hand or ministerial side. There were barely half a dozen members present, exercising themselves in abrupt dialogue. The house gradually filled. Lord Wellington one of the first. He looks determined and yet unintellectual, which he is. The debate was on bribery at elections, with evident reference to a particular case. Wellington spoke, brief and halting. A few of the government's supporters, one fluent, another not bad. All the speeches short. One lord in opposition spoke very well. Petitions were handed in. The Earl of Shrewsbury, a ministerialist, seems a distinguished young man. A bishop spoke against the ministers. Lord Melbourne, not looking well and in clothes that were almost dirty, replied energetically, conscious of his superiority. Lyndhurst rose; general attention. Melbourne made a violent reply, threatening, insulting. Lyndhurst rebutted the charges, not in the most courteous fashion. An interval followed. I went away, as it was nearly seven and I had not yet dined.

Saturday the 11th.— . . . In the evening to the Haymarket, where they gave *The School for Scandal*. The play very good in parts. Miss Tree excellent as Lady Teazle. Miss E. Philipps impressed me not unpleasantly with her genuinely English nature in speech and behaviour. Vandehoff good as Joseph Surface, at times a little strained. Vining good as Charles, but he makes his refusal to sell his uncle's portrait too serious from the start. Mrs. Glover very good as the gossip. Mr. Webster (Sir Peter Teazle) has the bad habit, in attempting pantomime, of constantly pulling

the ugliest faces, which makes a horrible impression without producing the desired effect. Otherwise many good points. On the whole, the performance was not on the same level as the piece. One could see it was a second-class theatre.

Monday, June 13th.— . . Dined in Covent Garden in a very good but outrageously dear hotel. Roast beef as tender as lamb; Moselle, very good but extravagantly expensive. In the evening to Covent Garden Theatre. A new opera or, to give it its name, Operatic Romance, *The Sexton of Cologne*. The singers not bad, the music tolerable, the scenery extravagant. After that *The Hunchback*, with the author, Sheridan Knowles, in the title-rôle. He made the part more comic than with us, more than it should be, I think. Miss Faucit is an excellent actress. A little exaggeration at times. But what natural perfection! I know nothing so impressive in Germany. That is the word. The better actors here are impressive. I know no impressive actor in Germany except Madame Schröder. Beautiful figure, beautiful hair, fine eye, magnificent voice. Nothing dropped or slurred, everything clearly rendered. The Germans try so hard to be natural that they become common-place; here at least they know they are practising an art.

Thursday, June 16th.—Day of my departure. Packed again, paid my bill, which good Mrs. Williams had made out higher than had been agreed at the beginning. Cheap all the same. Breakfast. A young German, Schultze, from Mecklenburg, who lives in the house, is going as far as Mainz with me. . . . A carriage is called. Departure. Mistress Williams has tears in her eyes and little Bella, too, seems concerned. We shake hands. Good-bye! and in we get. We reach the Custom House, put our luggage into a boat and row to the steamer. The ship is none of the handsomest, nor the swiftest, so they say. Only a fortnight ago she had to anchor off Flushing because her engines were damaged. She is called *Tourist*. I inspect the cabin—a dog-kennel, though of mahogany and bronze within. The deck full of passengers, mostly English.

We cast off at half-past ten in rainy but calm weather. Pass for the last time down London's great river-way. We are already abreast of the East India Docks. The houses become less frequent and disappear. The Thames swells to a sea, the shores recede more and more, become more indistinct. We are in the open sea. . . .

G. WATERHOUSE.

GREATED HE THEM.

I.

It was characteristic of Charles Sinclair to whisk me off immediately on my arrival. My bag he consigned with a wave of his hand to an outside porter on the platform, and I hoped devoutly that I should see it again in due course. Before I knew where I was, we were outside and walking up the street.

'So sorry,' he apologised; 'but we haven't any time; magistrates sit to-day, and there's a case on; must be there; thought you would be interested; semi-professional interest myself. Explain it as we go. I hope you've had some lunch,' he added as an afterthought.

As it was already nearly three and I had stayed with Charles before, I had taken that precaution.

We reached the court fortunately just as Charles's case was about to be heard. As we entered, by coincidence, the prisoner was brought in through a door directly facing us. I had a good look at him before we sat down, and I was interested, as Charles had said. I had never met a man to whom I took such an immediate and instinctive dislike. Everything about him contributed to my feeling of repulsion—his shoddy boots with their yellow kid uppers, his coat with its exaggerated waist, his smooth and plastered hair; but what set the seal on his nastiness was his face. It was thin and peaked—a rat's face, not a man's, and of the same colour as the foolscap that the magistrate shifted importantly between his hands.

His eyes were dull as mud: they never once brightened or changed their glazed expression. During the whole time that he remained in the court-room, only his mouth seemed alive, a sneering gash of mouth that seemed to stretch right across his face. It was a vivid red, and wet; for he moistened his thick lips continually with his tongue, so that they had a disgusting look of ripeness, such as one sees in fungus in a damp cellar.

His case, I suppose, was typical of what is heard week by week in a city court. 'Acting on information,' it appeared, the police had raided some low tavern where drink was flowing after hours, and worse was hinted, though nothing seemed to have been proved.

All the others, caught almost with glasses in their hands, had been already dealt with, but he was cornered in an upstairs room, and some devil of drink or desperation had led him to commit an aggravated assault on the police : ' Drunk as a ——, raving drunk, I should say, begging your worship's pardon,' a stolid constable related ; ' he were more vi'lent nor a lunatic.' There followed evidence as to character—the vigilant official eye, it appeared, had been on him for a very long time.

' Three months with hard labour,' said the magistrate wearily, and it was over.

We walked back to Charles's lodgings to tea. It was growing dark, and they had lit the lamps in the streets. The air in the lamplight was thick like gauze, so that you could positively see it. Factory walls and blank, dingy houses hedged the road on either side ; at intervals furtive little streets ran off and lost themselves in the darkness, fit runs, I thought, to hold such human rats as the prisoner we had just seen in the dock. But Charles seemed to feel no depression. He regards the city's slum in the same way that I regard my garden. It is his parish, and for four years he has worked there alone. For the living is too poor to pay a curate, and he is young, comparatively, and says that he is strong and healthy.

I watched him at tea and tried to discover how much the last four years had aged him. Scarcely at all, it seemed, except that he was whiter of face (for a city is a leech and sucks the red out of her inhabitants) ; and there were lines in his face that had not been there when I had first known him as curate in our little village under the Stretton hills. He is thirty, and he did not look more than thirty-five.

We had finished tea before he had had his fill of my country news. ' Tell me more,' he kept saying. ' It's all so good to hear.'

I had said it all in letters, but I told him again, village news mostly—births and deaths and farms that had changed hands. I told him how I had been sowing my February bean seed, and how the daffodils in the orchard were pushing their snouts out of their winter holes.

' Why ! ' I said, ' it's spring beginning with me there, but here—it's thick as winter ! How you stand it, I don't know.'

' I have to,' he answered briefly. ' It's what I do that keeps me here, and I have no time for thinking how I stand it.'

Charles is like a naked electric light, I often think. He is just as clear and direct and candid. His mind never goes one way and

his tongue another; and I find that his candour disturbingly provokes candour.

Thus I found myself provoked into an outburst against my will.

'I couldn't,' I cried, 'not—not continuously, without a holiday as you do! The air, the houses, the people! They're stifling! That man, that thing we went to see in court this afternoon!'

He was a little surprised at my vehemence, I think; but I suspected that there was more behind that incident in court than he had said. He had promised to explain, but I had had no explanation as yet, and I wondered if one was to be forthcoming now.

'I don't think you understand, old man,' he said at last. 'Look at it like this. Supposing you see people living in misery, you want to help them always and all the time.' He stated it as a simple fact. I knew him too well to think that he was conscious of any irony; but I said nothing, and he went on. 'And there are people here—hundreds—literally hundreds—living a hell of lives, and so I must stop and help them. That's all.'

'If that is a specimen,' I broke in—'if that is a specimen, what in Heaven's name can you do for them?'

'Oh, Lord,' he laughed ruefully. 'In most cases very little, in some nothing at all; but in some a very great deal—almost everything. For it's the little shove at the start that counts. And that's what makes it so worth while. Doctors tell you the same. They go on and on, just for the . . . delight of saving a human life. And so with us too . . .' (He hesitated. He was always shy of speaking of himself or his profession.) . . . 'And so with us too. We save lives sometimes and sometimes . . . souls. There are times when the one thing is the same as the other, I almost think. Why, even in the case of that man, there's a chance of doing good.'

I must have shown my thoughts in my face. For he took me up as if I had protested aloud.

'Oh yes. Good, I said, and I meant it. Not to the man. He must suffer first, and then perhaps, who knows? But at present he's beyond us, beyond anything, I think, except the infinite mercy of God. But he's married, and it's his wife I'm thinking of. Let me tell you, and you'll see.'

So that was the explanation. A wife! I had never thought of that.

'Three years ago she married him. Why do women marry men? He was the same little beast then. You'd have thought

he carried a barbed wire warning in his face, and since, he's been going steadily downhill. Drink and (though it sounds dreadful to say), I believe, other women as well. And she is married to him——

'And, mind you, she's a decent woman, decent all through—and through what she has been in the last three years, God knows! At first she used to come to church. Then she didn't come any more. So we went and looked her up. Oh, Lord, it was horrible! She had been struck; she had been knocked about; she had moved from a decent artisan's cottage to a wretched little tenement. We found her up to her elbows in a wash-tub and the whole place in a steam—dirty clothes and drying clothes—I don't know which smelled worse. That was her life, washing all day and at night—I don't like to think of what she had to endure. He came home then; or didn't come home; and I suspect that when he did, it was the need of money brought him. For she never had a penny to spend upon herself. But she couldn't keep up washing. It was killing her. So she took up sewing, making and mending clothes. And there she sits all day at her window, looking out into the filthiest little alley you ever saw. If that isn't hell, what is?'

'Yes, hell indeed,' I answered, and I meant it. 'But, Charles, you mean she's stuck to him—stuck to *him* all the time?'

'Through everything. Stuck to *him*. But it was the home, I think, that kept her. It's wonderful what a few sticks and a washstand and four walls will do for people, so that they can call it home. It's often the only real marriage tie, but (thanks be!) it's a strong one.

'Oh, I would like you to see her! It's a sight to stiffen a man. I know she won't come to church, but I'm not one of those who think that matters so much. Poor thing, poor thing, she's tasted life, and it's ashes in her mouth just now. Last Easter, this very last Easter, I asked her if she wouldn't come on Easter morning, and she replied, "I'm one of those outside the gate, but one of these days I'll be rid of it all, and then I guess I'll go in." You see? She wouldn't come. Life pressed her too hard; but at bottom she believes—she has faith! What is it Shakespeare makes Cleopatra say? "I have immortal longings in me." Well, so has she! "I guess then I'll go in." Isn't that a wonderful instance of faith?'

I saw what he meant, but I wondered.

'She might have meant,' I said slowly, 'that when she died her body would go through the church gate . . .'

He would not let me finish. 'Oh no, you are wrong. If only you could see her . . .'

'Well, couldn't I?' I put in tentatively. I had seen enough to intrigue me in the court room during the afternoon, and while I was on the spot I might as well see the other side. Besides no one could help catching fire at Charles's enthusiasm.

He was obviously delighted at my offer. 'Oh, would you come?' he exclaimed. 'I ought to have gone to see her after the case was over, but I put it off till to-morrow. I never thought you would be interested; but we can go this evening. You heard what he got in court: three months. It took us five to get him that!'

'You?' I said puzzled: 'but I thought the police caught him?'

'So they did—in the end; but they seldom move except "on information." They prefer to let sleeping dogs lie. But I knew about this fellow and I knew he had a burrow somewhere in the parish. My people aren't saints you know! And if you work as a parson in a neighbourhood like this, it's surprising how you pick up hints of something wrong here and something bad doing there. I don't like playing the spy: it seems low down, but the more I thought it over, the more I saw my duty plain. So I set to work and tracked him down. (I had helpers too, loyal helpers: the Devil hasn't everything his way after all!) And when we knew we went to the police . . . and then they had to act.'

'That assault was a lucky thing from your point of view,' I interposed, 'otherwise he might have got off with a fine or seven days.'

'Well, yes, it was,' he confessed. 'It sounds a horrid thing to say, but I expected something of the sort; really, I almost hoped for it. For he was just soaked through and through with drink. And it got him the three months. That's why I took you. We had to know. For we have found her a place while he is safely put away—in the country, sort of help on a farm—good people. They have been kind to us before—right in the blessed depths! Lord, how I envy her! But if you are ready, let's be going,' he concluded quickly.

My interest grew mightily. I had stumbled in one day upon the edges of what might be any kind of human drama, and now it seemed I was to be drawn further into the heart of it.

'I am ready,' I said; and then a sudden thought struck me. 'But afterwards—when he comes out?'

'Afterwards?' answered Charles soberly. 'We're all in God's hands and His mercy is infinite. He will surely find a way.'
I wished that I had Charles's faith.

II.

It was no great distance that we had to go: from Charles's lodgings into a thronged street more brilliant under the electrics than any daylight and then into one less fortunate, that was like the onrush of a sudden darkness; for the lamps were few and most of them at the further end. We went a little way and then turned into a run (I can call it nothing else) at right angles to the street, black as soot and paved apparently with cobbles. I could see no doors but Charles evidently knew his way, for he stopped at a blacker patch of gloom and knocked. We stood side by side waiting before the door. Every second the murk and darkness fell more heavily upon us. I think I shuddered. 'Isn't it horrible?' whispered Charles. 'This is her home, poor thing,' and he knocked again.

A step came shuffling and the door opened suspiciously a little way.

'Oh, it's you,' said a voice in evident relief and the door swung wide on a black passage.

She lit a candle for us and we climbed a steep and rickety stair to her room. It was high up; we passed three landings and three doors, grimy and blistered, painted some dark colour once. Behind them I thought I caught furtive sounds, a bed that creaked, a glass that clinked. The whole house inside seemed flimsy matchwood.

'You must have the bed, sir,' she said to Charles, 'an' the other gentleman must have the chair.'

She spoke without embarrassment, and I noticed she made a careful pause before her aspirates.

Charles sat gravely down with the innate courtesy that he has and she dragged an old soap box from behind the door and seated herself upon it. I could see her more clearly now in the candlelight. She sat, knees crossed like a boy and her hands lightly clasped round her knee. They were rough hands—blunt fingers and nails worn or bitten close—reddened with washing and roughened into calluses with sewing; you could read her history in them. She looked very like a boy as she sat. She was so short and slim and long-

legged. Like a boy's, too, was her bobbed short hair and cropped fringe that hid most of her forehead. So this was the woman who had been his wife three years long, this—this boy! I found it hard to believe until I looked at her eyes. They were not like a boy's and they explained many things.

I watched her (she was not looking at me) she was hanging on Charles's words, and well she might: for he was telling her of the country and how in two days she was to start. How she must hate that sordid little room, and how she must have suffered in it! But I was puzzled by her manner to him. There was respect in it and a kind of reticence, as if she was keeping something of herself back: no outpouring of thanks or expressions of delight as I should have expected. She seemed like a prisoner long kept in a dark dungeon led forth into the light and dazed and blinking at it. 'Yes, sir' and 'No, sir' she said, but very little else. If I had been Charles doing what he was for her I should have felt dashed.

At last he had finished and rose to his feet. The crazy bed (so small that it seemed it could not hold room for more than one) creaked with relief.

'Well, sir,' she said, 'the day after to-morrow—and then good-bye to this!' It was the first hint of any emotion that she had given.

So she ushered us down the stairs.

'Good-bye then, Mrs. Brooker,' said Charles at the bottom. 'In two days you will be starting, and it's a new life you will be going to. Thank God for it!'

She bade us good-night and 'thank you, sir,' she said in farewell.

We did not speak as we walked back. I was thinking and Charles, I believe, was praying. His is one of those natures—there are such—that can pray anywhere. When I looked at him his eyes were shining, and I could swear they did not see the streets through which we were walking.

III.

Next morning was a grey day. When I pulled up my blind drifts of weeping mist still hung about the street. Even when we were sitting at breakfast some of the chill outside seemed to have crawled into our sitting room. It was reaction, I suppose; we are so made that we pay for our moments of exaltation—at least, some of us do.

But Charles had been out already to an early service at the Mission Church, 'the old tin shanty,' as he called it. 'We had six,' he added with pride, and I could see that it sweetened his breakfast for him.

After breakfast he was full of apologies almost to incoherence. He must be away all the morning: parish business—impossible to put it off: and a meeting at one-thirty made it very doubtful what time he would be back to lunch. I had an idea that lunch was neither a regular nor a usual meal with him; so I checked him in mid flow and said that I would go out until tea and see the beauties of the town.

'Well, there aren't many beauties to see,' he said smiling, trying hard to smile his relief out of sight. 'Still, the people are always interesting and there are plenty of them . . .'

There were plenty of them, as I found when I went out, even at eleven in the morning, crowds, and scarcely a loiterer—'thick as autumnal leaves' (the quotation drifted into my mind as I walked), and bloodless as Homer's ghosts, that thronged the verge of Styx. I watched their faces as they hurried by me, pallid faces so colourless that you wondered where was all the blood that their hearts must be pumping through them. I marked the mean lines graven round their lips and eyes as if by some cynical and unloving carver. They were a type, I thought, and then on a sudden I remembered. Of course, of course. They were the same type as the man in court, the human rat that was starting this day to serve his three-months' hard. Some were better, some even as bad, but the same type one and all.

I found that I could not rid my mind of thoughts of him. I remembered every detail of him: his clothes, his grey leprous-looking skin, the red gash that his mouth made across his face, its beastly wetness—I remembered everything. I began to go over in my mind the events of yesterday and I came in my thoughts to the terrible little attic we had visited in the evening, and the woman: even over her his shadow lingered.

And oddly enough, at that moment I saw her.

I had reached what seemed to be a main street and she passed me walking with the crowd in the opposite direction before I fully recognised her. Then I felt a hand on my arm. I turned and she was smiling up into my face. She looked a different woman; she was so smartly dressed, a blue dress cut close to her figure so that she looked more like a boy than ever.

'Why, Mrs. Brooker,' I said ineptly, 'I shouldn't have known you!'

'It's my clothes,' she answered frankly. 'I'm all dressed up to-day . . .' and she smiled again.

She had evidently put on her best manners with her best clothes. Her smile had just the correct shade of friendliness in it, just that and no more; and her accent was as carefully handled as a restive horse, so that it scarcely danced out at all. She found that I was a stranger to the town and began to tell me what I ought to see: the library, the museum, the cinema . . . 'They say it's good, the pictures it has,' she said. 'Not that I've been much lately.'

I could well believe she had not. I wondered how much money was in the bag that swung at her wrist. As little, I was certain, as there was flesh in the hollows of her figure, where good flesh should have been; and I seemed in a flash to see through her little parade of smartness, I seemed to see her desperate for a little enjoyment, like a woman starved, reaching for the first scraps of food.

So I asked her if she would lunch with me, as I was going to lunch alone. She had to make an effort to keep up her pose, but after a perceptible pause she thanked me with careful politeness. She would take lunch with me: for it so happened that she had nothing particular to do.

But food and perhaps the garish restaurant to which we went thawed her at last, and over our coffee she was talking as naturally as a little girl.

'Isn't this good!' she cried. 'This is the sort of thing I get every day, I don't think!'

'Well, it's a bit of an exception with me,' I answered. 'You see, I come from the country.'

The smile left her face as if a sponge had been drawn across it. I was reminded suddenly, as I had been the previous evening, that though her body might be young, her spirit was not.

'The country!' she exclaimed. 'O Gawd!'

The exclamation, the rough accent, the oath rasped off her tongue as if they had been vinegar.

'The country,' she repeated. 'That's where they're goin' to send me!' and her voice sounded so forlorn and desolate that I felt I must say something to comfort her.

As gently as I could I said, 'But it will be better than this

city, this smoke and fog, and it will be rest after . . .' (I hardly knew how to put it) 'after what you have been through. Believe me, the country can be very peaceful. You can start again . . .'

She broke in upon what I was saying, like a little whirlwind. 'You too! Start again! That's what they're all saying. I could be sick, I could with hearin' it. What's a new life to me? They made the old 'un impossible. Oh, I know! Who got my man pinched? Not the cops. They would 'a let 'im be for weeks. No! 't was the reverends. Who'd 'a found out about Davy's back room else? An' who put the cops on it? The reverends did! An' the raid caught 'im excited-like—all them blue-bottles buzzin' about—'e wouldn't 'ave been the fool to 'it 'em else. My Bill was a one for keepin' out o' trouble, 'e was.'

She panted as she spoke: her emotion robbed her of half her good looks, but somehow I liked her better for it. I could not think what to say. Her real self, as she really was, had come suddenly, like a shy bird, out into the open, and I did not want to scare it away.

'E was my man. 'E was my man,' she kept repeating, hardly to me, but as if she were talking to herself.

A man! Why, he was hardly a man at all. It was tragedy that he was hers, and Charles had said that he struck her. Perhaps even she bore his marks as she sat at table.

'But,' I said, scarcely realising that I was saying it aloud, 'how you must have suffered from him!'

Her hand went up to her breast in an involuntary gesture; she winced as she touched it.

'Oh, I got his marks on me,' she answered as casually as if she were speaking of the weather. No emphasis could have made her words more sickeningly horrible. Then she flashed out again (I was glad that our table was in an alcove somewhat screened from the other people in the restaurant): 'An' if I 'ave, what of it? It's my business ain't it? Don't the reverends say as we were sent into this world to suffer? an' that's the truest word as they've ever said. I heard your friend say once, out flat in the pulpit, "we must pay for our pleasures," he says. Well, I pay for mine and I want 'em!'

'Pleasures!' I exclaimed. I hope there was nothing but surprise in my tone; but a sinister conjecture slid into my mind and stayed there a moment. But I knew that she was somehow aware of what I was thinking; and yet she took no offence.

I think that to her such a thought must have seemed a very natural one.

"Pleasures," I said, she answered with a trace of defiance. "Even the poor have pleasures." That's another sayin' as I have 'eard out of a pulpit—in my church-goin' days. S'welp me, but they do speak truth sometimes, don't they? 'Arsh truth too. "He's a drunkard," they says. I have 'eard 'em. So he were, an' why shouldn't he get tight when the world's treated him rough? I'm the one to object, an' if I doesn't, who else's business is it? "He ain't faithful to you," they says: tryin' to turn me against 'im behind 'is back. Don't I know it? Any woman could 'ave told 'em! Give a man a bit o' booze an' he's like a fly: settles on the nearest thing in skirts: greedy-like it makes 'im. But I was his woman, don't you make no mistake. He'd come back to me, when he'd 'ad enough. An' "Liz," he used to say soft-like, "yer body ain't much an' what there is is mostly black and blue, but damme, I likes it somehow best of all," . . . My Gawd, my Gawd, when I think o' the nights when he use to come 'ome lit up . . ."

It was terrible. Tears filled her eyes that were like tragic weeping pools—deep, God knows how deep!

'Don't talk of it,' I said, laying my hand on her sleeve. (I could feel the thin bone through the thin serge.) 'It must have been dreadful . . . dreadful.'

She jerked her arm away from my hand and gave me a long look before she spoke. It was a curious look, that took me utterly by surprise. There were tears in it and there was contempt; but there was more. There was actually pity. It made me feel as small as the coffee-cup on the table before me.

'Can't you see?'—she had dropped her voice: it was little more than a hoarse whisper—'No, how could you see? You ain't never worked all day, an' the evenin' too, in one room—attic I suppose a gent like you'd call it—if you 'ad, you'd want some fun. An' when did I get my fun? Not till after the pubs shut, you believe me. Then he'd come 'ome, when he did come 'ome, prop'ly sewn-up most nights. An' those was the nights! For when he were sober he was a proper sniveller. Then's when we 'ad words. But when he were in drink, Lord he was a wonder! An' if 'e did bash me—well I'm strong, ain't I? An' it wouldn't be for long—'cept when 'e was very tight—he'd see the marks an' he'd come an' kiss 'em. You saw 'im yesterday, eh? Weren't he a good looker? Lucky they copped him in 'is best suit. A real gent he looked in it!

Smart? Smart ain't the word! When he used to get sloppy and kiss me bruises, I could a thanked Gawd as I married 'im. 'Is mouth! You'd a' noticed 'is mouth? Like a boy's on the movies, weren't it? askin' for kisses, as if it were always hungry, eh? Oh, beautiful it was! An' then we use to sit on the bed an' he use to talk an' talk—the drink took 'im like that—"where'd you like to go, Liz?" 'e'd say—(such a voice 'e 'ad!)—an' then we'd go . . . miles an' miles away. Like one of those magicals he was that you see on the movies—jinnies, don't you call 'em? Just say the word and whoosh! You're away. He talk an' 'e'd take me with 'im . . . Furrin' countries . . . palaces and gold . . . an' streets with 'lectrics like diamonds . . . so bright as you wouldn't think . . . an' harbours with ships . . . ('e were rare fond o' ships; been a sailor once) . . . an' tea at tables in the streets . . . caifes with gold an' silver signs . . . an' parks an' walks an' bands an' chairs to sit on at nothin' a time . . . O Gawd, it was grand . . .'

Her whisper died out and I almost held my breath for fear that I should break the thread. For some full minutes she voyaged alone . . . 'All day, all day mendin' and sewin', all in one room, till you get fair sick o' the smutty patches on the wall an' too sick to lift your 'and to brush a fly off your neck—dirty devils flies! . . . An' then at night—that! Better than a 'scursion ticket to Blackpool! You bet I didn't mind the days, when I 'ad him at nights!'

At this moment a waiter (I could have struck him), came up and began to make up the bill. Instantly, in the flicker of an eye, she was the perfect lady. Her confidences might never have been given. She allowed me to take her to a cinema, out of pity for my loneliness, and in the darkness inside I think she allowed herself to cry a little (she had the film as her excuse). But one glimpse more she let me have of what lay beneath her elaborate and aspirated manner. It was as we said good-bye at the corner of Charles's street. She put out her hand for me to take it and then suddenly laid it on my arm.

'Here,' she said earnestly. 'About what I said in the restoorant. Not a word to his reverence! You promise?'

I promised, but she was not satisfied.

'Straight? You promise?' she begged. 'As a gent to a lady?'

I assured her again.

'Ah,' she sighed in relief, 'I wouldn't like him to know. He's

sendin' me away an' I'm goin'—into the country, into the blessed depths of it, I s'pose—it gives me the creeps to think of it! I'm goin' to-morrow—to three months' 'ard, just like my Bill. Poor lad, he's started on his by now. But mind you, it's for him I'm doin' it. Workin' for my man (that's how I look at it), just as I always 'ave, an' kept straight for 'im too. I've always been on the straight, I 'ave (I guess you knew that an' that's why I came out with you); but if anything 'appened to *him*, Gawd, I don't like to think of it' (her hand clenched my sleeve and tugged at it); 'but if it did, I'd go gay, I would. You make no mistake. There's money in it, an' I know girls as would put me on the way. I won't say as I haven't thought of it before now, 'cos I 'ave, but I ain't done it—because of 'im. It's wonderful what a man can do for a woman, ain't it? Oh, I guess he's been my guiding star, he 'as. An' three months ain't long, is it?'

But before I could answer her question she was gone.

I did not tell Charles of our conversation. I did not even tell him I had met her. When I reached his rooms, I found him full of news and bursting to tell it.

'That fellow we saw yesterday, you remember? Somehow I couldn't think that three months in prison would set him right. I was troubled about him all night, but I knew, I knew that God would find a way. He would not send His daughter back to the Hell from which we rescued her. And He has found a way, a greater way than any we could have taken . . .'

'Why,' I said, 'what has happened?'

'I have just heard,' he answered. 'He collapsed as he was being taken to the prison and in the night his heart gave out. He's dead, and that poor girl will find peace and happiness at last.'

MARTIN GILKES.

ALI BORALI.

BY MAJOR B. R. M. GLOSSOP.

ALI BORALI always reminded me of a gorilla, perhaps I should have mentally compared him to Tarzan had that celebrity been invented in those days. Up to the waist he was the ordinary lithe, active Somali, but from the waist upwards he seemed to get bigger and bigger; a huge chest was surmounted by a bull neck which in turn supported an enormous head, while his muscular arms were of a quite disproportionate length. He had a habit of throwing his head back, distending his nostrils and speaking with a deep booming voice, while to add to his gorilla-like appearance he would emphasise his remarks when labouring under emotion, which was frequently his condition, by thumping his great chest with his fists.

Borali was a man of repute in the land of the Somali. Numerous stories of his feats of strength and daring in encounters both with men and wild beasts were related, are doubtless related still—with additions—the reputation of a Samson or a Gideon when handed down by word of mouth is not likely to diminish thereby.

In many respects the Somali in those days were strongly reminiscent of the Israelitish tribes in the days of the Judges, living as they did a nomadic existence with their flocks and herds, perpetually subject to raids from their powerful neighbours the Abyssinians, always ready to retaliate when the opportunity occurred, and filling in the odd time by raiding each other or the more distant Ogaden or Dolbahanta tribes. Each tribe moved perpetually in its own orbit, generally following the rains for the grazing of their stock, and were under a patriarch or tribal leader chosen frequently for his personal prowess or gift of command. The purely inter-tribal warfare consisted as a rule of bloodless camel lifting; the young men of the Habr Unis would raid the camels of the Habr Awal, choosing carefully a time when they knew the Habr Awal were away looting the White Esa, and so on.

It was more like a great game and it was the exception for any casualties to occur; should however this happen the matter was frequently referred to the British representative at Berbera whose verdict, generally a fine of so many camels, was held to be final by both parties.

Ali Borali did not suffer from undue modesty, his stories always

began with 'I, Ali Borali,' but what was perhaps his greatest feat was related to me not by himself and I have reason to know it was strictly true. A raiding band of Dolbahanta came down on his tribe one day when the men were away transacting similar business of their own elsewhere; they drove off numerous camels, but camels are slow travellers and ere they were clear of the territory of their victims pursuit was hot on their heels. Anything in the nature of a stand-up fight being no part of the programme the Dolbahanta abandoned their haul and rode for their lives; Borali, however, had recognised the son of their chief amongst them, fairly rode him down and getting alongside dragged him out of his saddle and holding him across his pony's withers rode home with him; he then held him for ransom and actually obtained for his release the same number of camels that they had tried but failed to loot.

'Libbah,' the lion, helps to make many reputations in Somali; so long as he will leave the karias (native encampments) alone, the men are quite ready to leave him alone. But lions, especially when ageing and unable to catch game with ease, are apt to begin preying on straying or sick camels; this leads to frequent raids on the stock; then a herder disappears and it becomes only a question of time when shrieks on a dark night proclaim that the lion has forced a zeriba (stockade) to satisfy his taste for human blood. Victims will now be taken regularly, and as long as the man-killer lives no one knows when his turn will come. The men at this stage band together to track the lion to his lair in day time; once found they mob him, galloping round in circles, shouting, hurling spears, till they get him dazed and confused, when a picked man choosing his moment rushes in like a toreador to administer the *coup de grâce*. Borali both by his own and by other people's accounts was a 'spot man' at this game, and many were the stories he related to me over camp fires. I think though that none of them showed his complete contempt of danger when dealing with the great cats more than the following which was related to me personally by an officer of the Aden garrison who was hunting with Borali at the time. Borali was out one morning early looking for spoor; he was accompanied by one other Somali and was armed with a spear only. Rounding a clump of bush they came full on a large maned lion who was on his kill; the Somalis stood their ground, the lion roared and made several short rushes towards them. Now every animal is supposed to turn tail when a lion makes his rush, and the fact that any should not do so, practically always, in the case

of an unwounded beast, puzzles him and apparently makes him suspicious of danger. In this case the lion came to a stand some twenty yards from Borali and remained there snarling and lashing his tail; the other Somali was a few yards behind, Borali called to him to move off slowly, and as soon as he was out of sight of the beast to make what speed he could to camp and tell the white man that 'I, Ali Borali' was holding a lion at bay for him.

Nearly an hour had elapsed before the officer reached the scene. Borali and the lion were still facing each other and he got an easy shot and a fine trophy. The tracks, always so easily discerned in the Somali sand, told the whole story. The lion had tried walking round the hunter, but he had always presented a full front to him; then the lion had tired of it and started to walk off, whereupon Borali at once followed, bringing the beast round to face him again. How long this game of bluff could have continued it is impossible to surmise, but it was a wonderful feat of coolness and pluck.

Borali had once visited England. True, it was only as a stoker on a tramp ship, and he had penetrated no further than the Liverpool docks, but I'm sure it provided material for many camp-fire stories beginning 'I, Ali Borali' and dealing with the manner in which he was received at the court of the Great White Queen. Possibly this yarn would receive more credence than the unvarnished truth; it being impossible to conceive any greater extremes of difference than that between Somali and the Mersey. Somali, that land of great rolling tablelands covered with game, where you may travel hundreds of miles without seeing any habitation other than the temporary erections of some small nomadic tribe, that land marked by the extraordinarily clear atmosphere, the absence of any cultivation or industry, while the few men you may see camped near a water-hole are mostly lying on their backs in the sun crooning songs in praise of their fat camels or the beauties of their wives who, by the way, are generally busy herding the aforesaid camels:—the Mersey, foggy, busy, clanging, a hive of industry; Liverpool with its crowded streets, tramcars, traffic and bustle; all would be utterly impossible for a Somali to visualise.

Even Borali had not grasped much of the complexities of civilisation, if one may judge by a question he put to me one day, not in an inquisitive way but simply following a train of thought: 'How many wive you got?' and on my having to own to having none at all, 'Who look after your camels when you in Somali?'

Anyway his travels had given Borali a fair smattering of English which added greatly to his usefulness as a hunter and headman of a caravan. I picked him up at Aden where he had been delivering some sheep that he had brought down country from his tribe and had shipped across the Gulf; apparently he looked on a hunting trip as a little holiday before his return to his people. 'You hunt with me and I, Ali Borali, show you everything animal in Somali,' was his greeting when I first saw him.

Lion were the first and foremost object of the trip and we had some rather remarkable sport with them. We headed straight over the Goli mountains, only stopping to shoot a buck or two for meat and to make sure that everything, including my eye, was in working order. I was at first depressed to find I was missing easy shots, but Borali by way of being consoling remarked, 'Never mind, buck run away but Libbah (lion) run to you.' A little practice at an ant-hill showed that in the rarefied atmosphere of the highlands I was underestimating all my distances.

We began with a rather regrettable incident; our first news of lion was the report of a troop 'not too much far away'; I absolve Borali, I think the fault lay in my over-keenness and my failing to realise the vagueness of the native in judging distances. We should have moved camp to their vicinity and left them undisturbed till we had a whole day in which to tackle them. Instead we started on receipt of the news, about 2.30 P.M., struck the fresh tracks of five lions at 3.30, but they were on the move, and it was a quarter to six before we sighted one; meanwhile the country had changed, the open plain had become interspersed with heavy clumps of bush and the light was none too good when I saw a great gaunt yellow form cross a glade from one bush to another just in front. There was more delay before I could get a shot as the lion kept bounding out of the bush with snarling roars, only to pop in again before I could get my sights on him; at last I got my chance and killed him with a raking shot; then there was his head and skin to be taken off if they were to be saved from the scavengers of the night and this accomplished it was nearly dark, and at least four lions were moving in the bushes all round us. We had one more attempt, trying to turn another out of a bush, but there had been recent rain and the fire refused to get started, Borali, with a spear in one hand and a box of matches in the other, squatting down and raking sticks together within a few feet of a furious, snarling lion with the utmost unconcern. I covered him with my rifle as

soon as I saw what he was doing, but he was quite unconcerned whether I did or not. It was nearly dark by now and after all we had to give it up and start home; we lost our way, took 'tosses' in ant-bear holes, and did not arrive till after midnight, but we had one fine lion to console us, and that was all we got out of that troop, as next morning we found the other lions had dragged the carcass into the bushes, eaten every morsel, and then cleared right out of the country, and though we spooed them for many miles we saw them no more. Rather unusual as one would expect them to lie up near by after a heavy meal; how far can they have realised that the locality was unhealthy for them? It also solved a question that has often been debated: are lions cannibals? There was no doubt from the tracks that they and no lesser fry had finished off their lamented brother.

Our next venture was more successful. Getting news one morning at 7 A.M. of another troop of three lions which had been roaring overnight near a native karia, we rode off at once, and just four hours after I was eating a late breakfast in camp, having secured the lot. Borali was at my elbow throughout with a spare rifle; his instructions were very strict never to use this rifle except in the greatest emergency, and it showed some pluck and restraint that he evidently did not consider any emergency had arisen when a lioness charged through a bush and was only dropped 5½ yards from us. He never moved but stood holding the rifle ready to my hand.

A picture that has focused itself on my mind is my first sight of this troop. We could see from far off where they had killed during the night; the spot was marked by wheeling vultures overhead, and the fact that they did not come down showed that the lions were still on their kill. We made a very cautious approach and, suddenly in a glade there they were. It was only a flash, they saw me *almost* as I saw them, but for the moment I had seen a troop of lions undisturbed on their kill and I shall never lose that picture. A lioness was standing with one fore-paw on the body of a big Oryx bull, the other fore-paw was descending with sledge-hammer blows on the carcass, each blow being followed by the ripping, rending sound of the claws driven well home and tearing the skin off in strips, the while the lioness snarled round fiercely at her mates; these, a lion and another lioness, were pulling off chunks of meat and grunting horribly; they were barely full grown and I imagine the cubs of the first lioness and still 'under instruction' as to how to dismember a kill. Being full fed they did not go far—

in fact, one was killed almost on the kill and the others came to bay in turn after a short pursuit; luckily there was no combination against me.

On this and subsequent occasions on the death of a lion our return to camp was a ceremony; Boralí, who when actual business was on hand betrayed little of the Somali excitability, would go temporarily mad. Draping himself in the lion's skin with the grim head hanging over his shoulder and clasped in one arm, he would gallop his pony in circles singing the song of the lion, a peculiar chant reserved for these occasions; as soon as they heard this song in the distance every man in camp would hastily mount a pony, donkey, camel, anything that was handy and come to meet us in a whirling cloud of sand, galloping, shouting and singing their extemporary songs.

We eventually arrived in the land of the Ogaden Somalis; these were normally only on looting terms with my escort and camel-men who were mostly drawn from the more Northern tribes. I had armed my escort from the Aden arsenal which sufficed, happily, to keep the peace; but it was as well that the Ogaden had not seen my fruitless attempts to teach the aforesaid escort to hit a large biscuit tin stuck on an ant-hill at fifty yards' range. Boralí, I recollect, was much tempted by the Ogaden camels. 'Look him fat,' he would exclaim and groan and shake his head. He was like a little dog in a butcher's shop.

We crossed the Toyo plains on our return journey. Heavy rains had fallen during our hunting in the South and the plains were now covered with grass; from a distance they appeared like a great rolling lawn, but a closer approach revealed the fact that the herbage was very thin though some inches high; a few weeks' hot sun and the plain would be once more a desert. The game, knowing somehow the time and place for high living, had arrived in myriads, and the scene resembled the well-known descriptions of the South African veld in the days of Gordon Cumming, Oswald, Vardon, Cornwallis Harris, and others whose descriptions thrilled me in my youth. We did not, however, follow their ruthless methods; the great masses of buck made them so easy of approach that there could be no sport except in occasionally trying to cut out a very picked head. If a herd was alarmed it galloped at once into a second herd, when they would slow down; both herds would then trot a short way and be into yet a third herd which would refuse to be flurried, and the whole crowd would settle down to graze again.

It was all very enjoyable though, riding slowly about in the clear crisp mornings watching this teeming life. Occasionally a new kind of buck would be sighted or an exceptionally fine pair of horns. These would usually belong to a buck that had passed his prime of bodily powers, been driven out of a herd by a more vigorous rival, and thereby having lost his does who do his scouting for him, he was sure to be soon pulled down by the carnivora who follow all African game from the moment they are born till age or infirmity causes the inevitable end. It is really an advantage to all parties that he should have a merciful bullet; his trophies should be preserved, and his meat should feed the camp rather than the hyenas. Borali, perhaps, thought sometimes that a fat young buck was preferable to long horns, but such fancies could not be gratified.

There were three ways of getting the buck one wanted. One was to cut him out on one's pony, but our animals were small and grass fed and could not run to many long gallops; also the terrain was full of ant-bear holes and I was very much afraid of damaging my rifle in a fall. Another method was to sit in a tuft of grass ahead and down-wind of a herd; by staying motionless they would graze up all round you. I once counted over two hundred hartebeeste within fifty yards of me; but this was a tame affair except for purposes of observation or photography. Yet a third method that we usually adopted was an invention of Borali. A slight screen is effective or the reverse according to one's propinquity to it; Borali would hold a tuft of grass in front of us as we stalked on all fours. If the buck looked up we stopped and lay still; as soon as they resumed grazing we moved on again; it was extraordinary when we saw so clearly how they could not distinguish us.

It was about this time that we came across some more karias and amongst them Borali's own establishment. His camels were being tended in his absence by his three wives and I was taken over to be introduced. All three had been looted from some other tribe; he told me in their presence to which tribe each had originally belonged, and they smilingly nodded their heads, repeating the name of their tribe after him. They were apparently quite contented; indeed it was quite the correct thing to be looted; it may be that the ladies used to sit about outside the karias looking for it as they could only hope for a very unenterprising youth from their own people.

At this karia Borali produced a man who had been through an experience that I imagine must have been unique, for I have never

heard or read of anything like it. He was travelling with eight companions ; they camped for the night, and a small zeriba (thorn fence) was erected to protect their stock. In the middle was the gipsy tent consisting of a few poles and the camel mats over them. As every bush in Somali is a thorn bush and every tree a thorn tree, it is a matter of great ease to make an almost impervious zeriba in a very short time ; but perhaps they were hindered by darkness, perhaps over confident of not being in a lion country, anyway hardly were they asleep when a lion bounded in and coming through the camels, seized the man by the arm and dragged him out through the fence into the black night. No unusual occurrence so far, but here the remarkable part of the story comes in. The lion was alone and evidently not hungry—possibly a large, playful cub. He put the man down, walked a few yards away and sat down to watch him. The man, hardly injured as yet but hearing the lion purring and just seeing his great shape lay motionless in terror ; after awhile he essayed to crawl away ; in a second the beast was alongside him and playfully patted him flat to earth again, retiring once more to lie down and watch him. This happened again and again, the lion varying the performance by sometimes turning him over with his paw, sometimes picking him up in his jaws and giving him a slight shake. Watch a cat play with a mouse and you have an exact illustration of what was described to me, and for vivid description you cannot beat a Somali. This continued for hours ; the seven other Somalis were afraid to venture out in the darkness and had given up their comrade as dead, but with the light they sallied out with their spears, shouting and beating on anything that would make a noise. Their companion was lying close to the zeriba and a lion slowly rose from beside him, stretched himself, and with a yawn strolled off into the bushes. I saw the man twelve months after his terrible night. He was covered with white, healed scars, no very serious injuries apparently, but he had a scared look about him still, and Borali said that for weeks after the adventure his eyes were staring out of his head and that he still trembled at the sound of hunting lions roaring at night. Poor fellow, in a country where it is almost the exception not to hear them I fear his slumbers must have been uneasy, but he evidently enjoyed being exhibited and the importance of being perhaps the only man who has ever been played with all night by a lion.

When within a few marches of the coast on our return journey,
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we halted for a day and had some sports for the escort and camel-men.

The prizes were mostly fat sheep that I had purchased from a karia for the purpose; there was also some cloth that was left over from the store I had taken for barter with the inland tribes, white and 'extra-superfine,' well adapted for making 'tobes,' the flowing garments in which the Somali loves to disport himself on great occasions and in which he somewhat resembles a full-dressed bishop.

The sports were a huge success, but the excitability of the Somali nearly led to an ugly fracas during the spear-throwing competition; he is just a merry child on most occasions, but at any moment liable to go off half-cock, see red, and become a devil. At such moments he needs careful handling. On this occasion some trivial argument sprang up and in a moment the cheerful shouting of those who were encouraging the competitors was changed to a babel of angry roars; one man was threatening another with his spear and the rest were picking up their weapons prepared to take sides.

I had picked them originally from some five different tribes with the idea of preventing too much collusion against myself in case of any trouble. This, however, did not always lead to harmony among themselves, as the tribes are always very jealous of each other. The next tableau was the threatened man running for his life with the spear-man in pursuit and Ali Borali hot on the heels of the spear-man. This latter intervention gave pause to the rest who held my long-armed hunter in great awe and respect. Another few seconds and the aggressor was in Borali's arms, the spear was wrenched from his hand and fell harmless to the ground; he himself appeared to turn a cart wheel in the air, his head and shoulders came to earth with a thud, and Borali dragged him back by the legs, amid shouts of delight from the audience. Harmony was restored as magically as it had been broken; in no time everyone, including the would-be murderer and his victim, was on the best of terms again.

I was really sorry to part with Ali Borali at Aden whither he accompanied me from Berbera, he was such a cheerful companion under all circumstances, and no one could have managed my mixed crowd of escort, camel-men and camp-followers better; he saved me endless trouble and allowed me to devote all my time to the business in hand of hunting game. Not perhaps temperamentally

suited to the complications of modern civilisation, he was nevertheless cut out for a tribal leader.

It is unavoidable in the nature of things that after intimate association with native hunters sometimes for months on end, at the end of the trip a veil descends and one never hears of them again. I did hear once more of Ali Borali. A few years after my hunting trip I met an old friend in my club, the late Colonel Kenna, V.C., 21st Lancers, who had just returned from commanding some tribal horse in one of the expeditions in quest of the elusive Mullah. I asked him if he had ever come across my old hunter and found he had known him well; he had actually been serving in the contingent commanded by Kenna.

Both 'Ali' and 'Borali' are fairly common names in Somali, but his description of him left no doubt of his identity—the bull neck, the roaring voice, the extraordinary arms.

Apparently on joining the levy Borali was so boastful of his own virtues that it was doubted if he really possessed them, but it was not long before he proved himself to be an invaluable scout and, I use his C.O.'s own words, 'A lion in a tight corner.' He was promoted a sergeant for gallantry in the field. The night before the last fight of this campaign which temporarily broke the Mullah's power, Borali came up to Kenna tapping his rifle and throwing his head back boomed out 'You see this ruffle; I, Ali Borali, with this ruffle kill 99 Somalis, to-morrow I kill 100.' It may be, and if I know him it probably was, that he carried out his boast, but 'I, Ali Borali,' had hunted his last lion, raided his last camel and fought his last fight; at the end of the day he was found dead of a spear wound.

WITH THE PRINCE IMPERIAL AT WOOLWICH.

VISIT TO CAMDEN PLACE, CHISLEHURST.

ONE afternoon, late in 1872, I was writing in the library of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, when the Governor came in with a small party of visitors, all talking French. He introduced me to them, and proceeded to inform me that it had been arranged that the Prince Imperial, the son of the ex-Emperor Napoleon III. was to join the Academy, and go through the various courses of instructions with the other cadets. He was to be accompanied in all his work by a friend, young Louis Conneau, who had been his playmate from youth. I was at the time under officer, or head cadet, of the B Division, which the Prince was to join, and I was given to understand that I was to look after him on parade, at meals, and generally when not in class-room. No difference whatever was to be made in his treatment from that of the other cadets.

Soon afterwards the Prince joined the establishment, and some rooms were told off for him, but he did not use them much, but occupied, with his tutor, M. Filon, and young Conneau, a house on the Common, just outside the enclosure, where he spent much of his time studying history, high politics, and other subjects not included in the curriculum of the ordinary cadet. On Saturdays he always went home for the week-end to Chislehurst, a few miles away, where his parents were living. He usually rode over on a splendid horse that was sent for him, Count Clary, his A.D.C., who came to escort him, being generally mounted on a magnificent bay that the Emperor had ridden at Sedan.

The cadets messed in the dining-hall at tables of nine each. An under officer or corporal presided at the head of each table and carved. Cadets of different classes sat, according to seniority, at each side, while the lowest seats were occupied by two 'last joined,' who cut bread and poured out beer (with a head on it) for all the others. At my table these duties were performed by the Prince and young Conneau. The beer, a somewhat weak beverage, was in those days drunk by almost everyone, and empty glasses passed with great frequency to and from the bottom of the table. At his

first dinner the Prince, mindful, perhaps, of the light wines of his country, diluted his beer with much water, but the resultant compound evidently failed to please, for the experiment was never repeated. The Prince did not pass an entrance examination, but went up for the examinations at the end of each term, and did extremely well at them, considering that they were negotiated in what was to him a foreign tongue, while he did not take up French at all as a subject for marks. He and Conneau spoke English perfectly. They had no time for cricket or football, but excelled at gymnastics and fencing, and were perhaps the best riders at The Shop.

His mother often drove over to Woolwich to see him, but owing to bad health the Emperor could not accompany her. I only heard of his paying one visit, when he was shown over the whole place, and expressed much pleasure at everything that he saw.

Once or twice a cadet of the Prince's term, or class, was invited to Chislehurst for the week-end, and on his return invariably appeared more astonished at the kindness of his hosts than by anything else. When Christmas approached, only a short week's leave was announced, as the term was to end in February, so many of the cadets whose homes were at a distance did not think it worth while to leave Woolwich. One day it was given out at dinner-time that those who intended to stay must send in their names in order that suitable arrangements could be made. The Prince seemed astonished, and asked me whether anyone would be so unfortunate as not to spend Christmas at home. I told him that several would, I among the number, and that it wouldn't be so bad as he imagined for those who didn't go away. A few days later he said he wished to speak to me. I was hurrying to take a riding parade, so I brought him to my room, where, while I was changing into riding overalls, he said that 'his mother had told him to ask me if I would come to Chislehurst for Christmas.' Of course I accepted the kind invitation, but with considerable trepidation. One comfort was that I was to wear uniform during my visit, as the Prince always did so when at home, so I, of course, would do the same. This arrangement saved me from much perturbation of mind as to the details of my toilet, for it must be remembered that I was to be thrown into the society of the members of the most resplendent Court that the world had ever seen. All that is pretty well forgotten now, but I can think of nothing at the present time to compare to it.

Accordingly, on the afternoon of Christmas Eve I set off with Louis Conneau in a brougham that had been sent for us. I was very diffident and nervous, and never enjoyed a drive less. I asked Conneau certain questions as to my conduct and deportment, but he only laughed and assured me that my apprehensions were groundless, and would soon be dispelled. I was little reassured, and by no means pleased to arrive at the door of Camden Place. We were shown into a small room used as a study and recreation room by the Prince, whom we found there, preparing a big Christmas tree for the morrow. We were told that the Emperor was confined to his room, and the Empress had gone up to town for the afternoon. We helped in the decoration of the tree till the gong sounded for dressing for dinner at seven, and then dispersed to our rooms.

My bedroom was on a short lobby, into which the Prince's also opened. When I was dressed he knocked at my door and said, 'Come along and I will introduce you to my mother,' and, leading me into a long corridor, left me standing alone in an unenviable state of mind; but he soon reappeared accompanied by the Empress, to whom he introduced me. She welcomed me so kindly that my terrors vanished, and said that 'she had heard that my relatives lived in Ireland, that she was delighted that I had been able to come to Camden Place, and that she hoped that I should not find my visit dull.' We then went down to the drawing-room, where a crowd of people were assembled, to all of whom I was introduced, then on to dinner in the dining-room, the Empress on her son's arm first, then the ladies, and last the gentlemen. I was placed at table between two English-speaking ladies, as my powers of expressing my thoughts in intelligible French were limited.

The Emperor did not appear at dinner, nor did I see him at all during my visit, as he was confined to his room by the illness which eventually proved fatal. I was told by other cadets who had visited Camden Place that he was a most thoughtful and kind host, always cheery and never depressed, as might have been expected after such misfortunes. His charity and kindness to the poor of the neighbourhood had greatly endeared him to them.

The Empress Eugénie, considered the most attractive woman of her day, was immensely popular amongst her entourage on account of her tact, kindness to, and consideration for, others. She was always on the qui vive to discover anything that might add to their comfort and enjoyment. It might be imagined that, with a large house party and when the Emperor was so seriously ill, a youthful

stranger might have been neglected without any great want of politeness on the part of the hostess, but far from it. If the Woolwich cadet had been an Ambassador of a foreign Power he could not have been treated with more consideration, or been better looked after. Speaking English well, the Empress was possessed of a keen sense of humour, and often told excessively amusing anecdotes of circumstances which had come under her notice. She appeared to be absolutely devoted to her son, her very existence wrapped up in his, and she often spoke of France, not as if she were an exile, destined, perhaps, never to return, but as though she had left it for a short visit. She dressed plainly, and wore no jewellery.

Among those staying in the house were the following : Count Clary, A.D.C. to the Prince, a cavalry officer who had distinguished himself in Mexico. His wife, a very fascinating woman, who was in constant attendance upon the Empress, and spoke English well. Dr. Conneau, an old friend of the Emperor, whom he had helped to escape from the fortress of Ham ; quiet but impressive in manner ; now the Emperor's physician, scientific, and given to the study of Hebrew and Chaldean subjects. His son, Louis Conneau, my fellow-cadet, was a very nice fellow, and was always ready to help me in any difficulty during my visit ; after leaving Woolwich he went to St. Cyr, and eventually became a conspicuous leader of cavalry in the Great War. M. Filon, the Prince's tutor, young, vivacious, and attractive. Mme. Le Breton, sister of General Bourbaki, alone of the ladies, did not speak English. Mme. Barthélmie and two daughters, who wore splendid jewellery. Baron Corvisart, assistant physician. The Duc de Bassano, the beau-ideal of a polished courtier. M. Pietri, the Emperor's private secretary, who afterwards acted in that capacity to the Prince, and later still to the Empress. Besides those stopping in the house, visitors from France turned up daily, all arrayed, even at 11 A.M., in evening clothes. Some of them may have been old friends of the Empire, intent on political matters. Conspicuous amongst them was M. Paul de Cassagnac, editor of the *Pays*, a man of gigantic stature and a notorious duellist. He had just received a challenge from M. Rame, the editor of *La Patrie*, which incident was considered by the ladies as a good subject for chaff, but all the men seemed shy of approaching the topic.

To return to the party at dinner, I noticed that everyone, including the ladies, drank wine diluted with water, in tumblers, and

liqueur brandy after dinner, and freely used, throughout the meal, the toothpick laid by each plate. Each glass had an N. and a golden crown on it. The Empress and the Prince sat in the middle of one of the long sides of the oval table and conversed freely across it. After dinner the men adjourned to the billiard- or smoking-room to consume black coffee and the Emperor's cigars, afterwards to the drawing-room, where tea was dispensed, most of the company eating ginger-bread with it. At a late hour the Empress bade good-night to everyone, then kissed her son, after which he knelt down and kissed her hand. His body-servant, an ex-cuirassier named Uhlman, slept every night on the ground across his door, as threats had been made of attempts on the Prince's life. Uhlman later accompanied him to South Africa, and, though not with him at his death, was called upon to identify the body afterwards. The valet told off to me spoke some sort of patois, and could understand neither my French nor my English, so communication of ideas between us was difficult. Just before breakfast he would rush into the room, seize all my clothes, and vanish with them, returning with them only just in time to save me from unpunctuality. The room was very handsomely furnished, the bedstead gilt, and fine mirrors on the walls, but the jugs and basins were small, and the towels were not larger than handkerchiefs, though of the finest material. In one of the sitting-rooms was an enormous photograph album, about four feet square, each page holding sixty-four portraits of well-known French actors and actresses. There were several gaps amongst the number, and these, the Prince assured me, had held photographs which, from time to time, had been abstracted by visitors. There was another album, which had been presented to him on one of his birthdays by some regiment of the Guard; it contained the signature or mark of every man in the regiment. Another large book contained coloured illustrations of all the various uniforms of the Imperial Army, a dazzling and variegated array. The Prince pointed out various small alterations which 'he intended to make when he should go back to France.' One day he showed me the uniform, a diminutive one, which he had worn at the fight at Saarbrück, and talked about the war, and the terrible time that he had gone through, illustrating the details of the scene at Saarbrück by a rough sketch on a torn piece of paper, which I still possess. He was an exceedingly good draughtsman.

I cannot remember how the days were spent; some evenings

there were theatricals and music, or impromptu dances got up. The Empress did not join in the dancing, but once, passing through the room where it was going on, she danced a quadrille with the youngest and shyest of the guests. As an instance of her thoughtfulness, I may mention that on Christmas Day I was detained in church a little later than the rest of the party, who went to the chapel, and lunch was delayed till I returned, lest I might feel awkward. Once we went up to London in plain clothes and did Astley's and a theatre. On most days we went out for a ride, a well-mounted party. The harness-room was well worth seeing—a gold and velvet saddle of the Emperor and three crimson velvet side-saddles of the Empress, for use on State occasions, being specially remarkable.

My visit to Camden Place lasted five or six days.

The Emperor died on January 9, 1873, and a Lying in State was announced for the 14th. Several of us cadets walked over to it, and speedily found ourselves merged in a large and disorderly crowd, both inside and outside the gates of the enclosure of Camden Place. There was much shoving and jostling, some arms were broken, and several women fainted. Matters might have been worse but for the intervention of the cadets and some gunners, who repelled the mob round the gates. Eventually we were admitted, one by one, into a pitch-dark corridor, running the whole length of the building. There was no sound but the monotonous 'Pass on! Pass on!' of the police on duty. All the windows, ceilings and walls were covered with black cloth. Suddenly, as we passed along, a bright light shone on us from a small room on the left, the open door of which was draped with black curtains slightly drawn back. Just inside the opening into this room, within a few feet of the passers-by, was the coffin containing the body, dressed in the blue uniform of a General of Division, with a broad crimson ribbon across it. The Emperor lay apparently peacefully asleep, his hands crossed, as if in prayer, across his breast, and no one could look on the dignity of that dead face without realising that there lay one who had long been regarded as the greatest man on earth. In that room where dancing and theatricals had taken place a fortnight before now stood by the coffin several Gentlemen of the Household, while priests prayed unceasingly. The floor was covered with immortelles and violets, white and purple. I doubt if any who witnessed that solemn and beautiful sight will ever forget it.

The Emperor's funeral took place next day, the 15th, and I and

six other cadets, chosen to represent the R.M. Academy, joined the cortège, amongst whom were a few Englishmen—Lord Sidney, representing H.M. Queen Victoria, the Lord Mayor, and other notables. About 1500 French gentlemen, most of them wearing decorations, were inside the enclosure, where the procession was formed. The cadets were placed directly behind the personal friends, and after them came Marshal Canrobert, Generals Le Bœuf and Frossard, and 400 generals and admirals who had served under the Empire. A deputation of thirty-four Parisian *ouvriers*, in working dress and blouses, were also conspicuous. An enormous crowd, brought down by special trains, looked on, but there was no confusion, as a large force of police was present.

On arrival at St. Mary's Chapel, on the Common, an impressive service was held, prominent seats being allotted to the cadets. I think everyone must have pitied the chief mourner, the poor, pale-faced boy, who followed the coffin, his deep mourning contrasting with the wide ribbon of the Legion of Honour. On his return to Camden Place after the service a fresh ordeal awaited him, for he had to see and personally thank all the friends who had come over from France, shaking hands with everyone, and addressing a word of thanks to those he recognised, amidst a crowd who made little effort to restrain their emotion. A few days later he returned to Woolwich with Conneau and M. Filon.

The French Republican press, always hostile and frequently abusive, published, some time after, a report that on his return to the Academy his comrades, who had at first shown an indulgent compassion for his intellectual capacity, now regarded him as a political pretender, put him in Coventry, and refused to speak to him. This was absolutely untrue. Every cadet who knew him regarded him with goodwill, esteem, and affection.

Perhaps an idea of his character may be obtained from the following answers which he wrote in a friend's confession album (M. Filon's 'Memoirs of the Prince Imperial'):

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| ' What is your favourite virtue ? | . Courage. |
| Your leading passion ? | . Patriotism. |
| Your idea of happiness ? | . To do good. |
| Your idea of unhappiness ? | . To live in exile. |
| Where would you like to live ? | . In France. |
| Your favourite author in prose ? | . Bossuet. |
| „ „ verse ? | . Corneille. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Your heroes in history ? . . . | Napoleon. Cæsar. |
| " heroine " . . . | Joan of Arc. |
| Your object of aversion in history ? | Judas Iscariot. |
| Your present state of mind ? . . . | Sad. |
| For what faults have you the most indulgence ? . . . | For those that spring from a kindly feeling. |
| Your motto ? . . . | Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.' |

W. D. C.

LANDS.

I have been told of many strange, dim lands ;
 And many a book have I held in these hands,
 And taken wonder and delight therefrom :
 —That land where men, proven their masterdom,
 From closing of the night till rise of morn
 Hunt thro' deep woods the plunging unicorn ;
 Then, if the spear strike true, a feast is spread,
 And in its midst is set the hornèd head :
 —That land, whose midmost city shrines a space
 Where stands a statue in a trance of grace ;
 And all men there wait till a sudden word
 Come from the marble lips : when it is heard,
 A tremor will strike the yellow-mantled day,
 Sorrow will spread gaunt wings and launch away :
 —That land, wherein a tree of ancient root
 Grows, and puts daily forth a scarlet fruit :
 If one eat of that fruit, then one becomes
 A bird with scarlet crest and scarlet plumes,
 And able to thread the air this and that way,
 While lasts the prodigal amber-dropping day :
 —And then that land, where, in a forest still,
 (That like an ill-thrown cloak, half-wraps a hill,)
 There is a glade full of bright, murmuring flowers.
 If one lie there, one sleeps and dreams for hours ;
 And when one wakes, one knows, beyond recall,
 All things that in the future will befall :
 —And I remember other, strange, dim lands. . . .
 Oh not enough to hold books in my hands
 And read of these, or hear men tell of these !
 I would set out for them : cross jewel-seas
 And come to them ;—to the loveliest one come in,
 And hear remotely pass the world's high din.
 There, in that still, dim land I would know peace,
 And live in beauty till life's beauty cease.

VERNON KNOWLES.

JACKIMO.

UNSCRUPULOUS people not infrequently essay to misguide the innocent and credulous into the belief that Italian is an easy language to pronounce. 'It is so simple' is the insidious formula. 'You just give each letter its full value, and that is all!' Is it?

Some of us have heard or read of one Petrarch, who was enamoured of a lady called Laura. The simple method of expressing his passion would, in English, be 'Laura, I love you.' In Italian the execution is not quite so easy, 'Lah oo rah. Eeo t'armo.' The double 'o' rhyming with 'who.' Rather a mouthful.

After all, a rule once mastered, the rest is straightforward. Mr. Alfred James was not Italian. He was English, but for personal reasons had derogated from the high standard of Jack Rackstraw in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. He had yielded to the temptation to belong to another nation and become Italian. Now the Italian for James is Giacomo.

In accordance with the illustration of the rule as given above the pronunciation should be quite simple: 'Gee ah comb o.' It is not. It is Jackimo—as near as no matter. Anyway, that is what Mr. James called himself and, if his accent was not quite Siennese, at least he spoke in 'a tongue understood of the people'!

Mr. Alfred James's native language was, as may be inferred, not Italian: it was Arabic, street Arabic, and to this tongue he always resorted in time of stress, heedless whether it was intelligible or not. Nevertheless, he possessed really remarkable linguistic capacity. He had received the usual State education but, unlike the average East End State-educated, he could speak, if needs were, quite tolerable English with a not intolerable accent. At the age of seventeen his prospects were quite rosy. He was earning quite good money from his father, and was getting quite well known in boxing circles as a promising kid on the big side. His future was rosy: his present never was—at least, never for long. If his linguistic capacity was remarkable, it took a back seat when compared with his capacity for impecuniosity—and he did not drink, neither had he a taste for gambling.

With the coming of sweet seventeen the roseate hues vanished from present and future. It seemed that 'Fyte had a dahn on him and his.' 'Flu came along and carried off his mother and the elder of his two sisters. The shock and loss dislocated his father's not

too reliable construction. He took to drink—nay, that is not quite true: he had done that long before. He let himself loose and went on the unhallowed 'bust,' bust his business, and finally bust himself. That happened in the Tube, and the verdict was 'Accidental Death.' Alf James thought otherwise. Whether Alf or the Coroner was right matters not. What does count is that thereafter Alf found himself with his frail little sister on his hands, without a roof over his head and without a mag in his sky. This last phrase is Arabic and poetical.

A slight digression into the etymology of that ancient tongue may perhaps be pardoned. In dim, bygone ages some old sage, recognising that even a cop—(being a sage he preferred the good old Anglo-Saxon word to the bastard mixture of Greek and Teutonic expressed in policeman)—that even a cop might spot that Emsta might signify Thames and that Regnig Ela was merely exact back-slang for a much advertised if unpopular drink. Wherefore he had recourse to the Immortals, or rather the tongue of the Immortals, to wit, poetry. For instance, pocket rhymes with rocket, sky-rocket with my pocket. Take away the number you first thought of and sky remains as the equivalent of pocket. It is a pity there is no Chair for this branch of philology at Bethnal Green University.

Beneath these bludgeonings of chance the head of Alfred James was not unbowed. Had there been no one but himself to consider he might have been as defiant as Henley, if less studiously profane. Also, unlike that distinguished poet, he was not such a fool as to imagine himself master of his soul, and, as for being captain of his fate, why 'Fyte had a dahn on him.' In this perplexity he addressed the steamy, stuffy atmosphere—and late July in 1914 was hot—and asked what in the name of heaven was to be done.

Heaven was not exactly the locality addressed but, as 'there is no place where earth's frailties have such kindly judgment given,' it was heaven that answered him. The answer took the form of a placard bearing the legend 'The Ever Open Door.'

'Another blinkin' picture show,' pronounced A. J. testily, adding that he was sick to death of pictures. Nevertheless, in spite of his alleged nausea, he found himself studying the offending notice almost against his will. Temporary annoyance merged into incredulity. Across the base of the sheet ran an incredible number of figures, followed by an incredible number of noughts.

'There ain't so many blinkin' kids in the wide,' was his first

comment, then reflectively, 'leastwise, there ain't no homes big enough to hold them. Blinkin' lies, all of it.' Yet again, almost against his will, he found himself drawn to study the category of alleged falsehoods.,

The study fascinated him. He became so absorbed that, forgetting he was on a crowded thoroughfare, he stepped back. The immediate result was a reminder, couched in the gentle accents of expostulation peculiar to Bethnal Green, that he was unduly obstructing the traffic.

In ordinary circumstances the consequences might have been unpleasant in the extreme for the other party. Alf James was something of a star in Wonderland, and beyond for that matter. Sundry astute judges thought that, concealed in his somewhat lanky frame, were possibilities of that very rare bird, 'a good big 'un.' As it was he turned and asked almost beseechingly :

'D'yer think they'd tyke in my little sister Alice? We're broke, shot out of 'ouse and 'ome ter night and she's——'

He was going to add she had always lived like a lady, but the recollection of the pinchings of the last few weeks precluded the assertion. The other party's reply was a question as to the exact place of his birth, supplemented by another demanding inconsequently whether he himself knew he was born yet, which queries strangely comforted Alfred James. Forthwith he made his way to Stepney Causeway. There he told his tale.

He was unused to kindness, and the brutality of recent fate had sapped him. It is not to be accounted to him for unmanliness that his voice quavered as he replied to the last assurance that all would be well :

'Are yer quite sure you can take care of her proper? She's weak, pore little kid, not enough to eat. I've done my——' he checked himself—'all I can, mister.'

'Like to have a look round?' was the cheery reply.

Alfred James did like, and had a vision of ordered comfort as Alice had never approached, even in her most lady-like days.

'D'yer mean to say you'll take her in here—here, guv'nor, and for nuthin'?' His voice broke, broke pretty badly. 'Ere, bless yer, guv'nor—yer knows what I means. I'll bring her round to-morrer morning.'

'You'll do nothing of the sort,' retorted the 'guv'nor.' 'You'll bring her round just as soon as ever you can. Right away, man. Quick!'

The 'guv'nor' was a better judge than Alfred as to Alice's welfare. He was not much too soon either. The discomfort Alice was experiencing was not due to the heat of the weather but to low fever. He was also a better judge of Alfred James than Alfred James himself.

Alice safely bestowed, Alfred James set out to 'look the whole world in the face,' the master of his fate, the captain of his soul, and several other noble and poetical things. He spent that night in the police cells.

It was no particular fault of his own, except carelessness. He managed to get mixed up with a bad crowd, managed to get into what they called a club, managed to do so on the night the police elected to raid it, managed to escape next day with a caution only, the final upshot being the loss of a job he had been promised. His prospective employer was a good man, a very good man, so good that there were few, if any, better than himself—the white flower of a blameless life that he wore was at least the size of a cabbage—one of those good men who ought to be kicked. A good man, but somehow very unlike the warden of The Ever Open Door. Alfred James experienced a feeling of savage resentment against fate. Under the heading of fate was catalogued the good man.

The feeling was not inexcusable. It was bad enough to be run in for no fault of his own, bad enough to have to spend the night in cells, bad enough to be planted in the prisoner's dock, but to be turned down, deprived of honest money to be earned by honest work, and piously lectured into the bargain was too bad. Alfred James knew that good man's house, he knew that good man's habits, one of which was going away for a week-end, leaving the house in charge of a trusty retainer who also took a week-end off as soon as the cat was away. A. J. determined that when the cat returned it should find itself minus an appreciable quantity of milk. That was very early in August 1914.

Alf. was as near as no matter copped. He had been close enough to the constable on duty to see and recognise him and, although that efficient officer's vision had been dazed by the projection of the whole of the swag, bag and all, into his face, Alf had an uncomfortable feeling that he too had been recognised. He had made good his escape, true enough, but it was no less true that he had the wind up. 'Sleep, gentle sleep, nature's soft nurse,' had got the scare of a lifetime through uncanny recollections of fingerprints and such-like unhallowed testimonials to the acumen of the

police in tracking down crime. Indeed, Alfred James would have been juggled for a certainty had it not been that right on the top of his venture had come the declaration of war. Alfred James promptly enlisted. The odd thing is he did not do so to escape detection: such a thought never came into his mind. He was a creature of impulse and it was on impulse he acted.

As a matter of fact the device, if purposed, would have been vain. The constable from whom he had escaped was certainly not one whit less patriotic than he. One the one side was his duty as a policeman, on the other duty to his country. It was obviously more desirable that a man should fight the Germans than occupy a prison cell. A bash in the face with a bag full of swag, however, confuses the ideas. He kept a wary eye on the batches of recruits and spotted Alf. Then he did his duty and reported his find to the sergeant at the station. The sergeant was not one whit more patriotic than the constable, but his ideas had escaped the confusion consequent on the impact of a bag of swag. He affirmed that the said bash must have disordered the constable's sight and that, if not, it ought to have. The constable forthwith saw clearly, and in due course Alf went south-west unmolested by the law.

From the date of his attestation fate apparently modified the pressure of her alleged 'down' on him, though she did not entirely remove it. He turned out a good, clean, hard-working, sober private, but private he remained. Men not so good as he attained unto their lance-stripes and even to stripes, but not Alfred James. The explanation was that he had omitted to read Erkman-Chatrian's 'Conscript,' or at least to appreciate the principles expounded therein by Joseph Bertha, conscript: he did not understand discipline. 'Discipline,' Joseph Bertha explains, 'does not consist in learning how to keep step, to drill, to handle your weapons and so forth. Discipline means that the corporal is always right when he speaks to the private, the sergeant when he speaks to the corporal, the sergeant-major when he speaks to the sergeant, and so on right up to the field marshal, even if he say that two and two make six and that the sun shines at midnight. A. J. took a long time getting this essential of service into his head, and his obtuseness brought him into disfavour with the N.C.O.'s. Not that they made his life a miniature Hades—he was too good a soldier and too good a fellow for that, but like Mr. Kipling's Boanerges Blitzen, he found promotion didn't come his way.

In other respects, however, fate was marvellously kind. By

every rule of war A. J. ought to have been killed half a dozen times over before the end of his first year's service. When he had 'drunk delight of battle with his peers' with the gloves on, he had always a fancy for mixing it, and when it comes to mixing it with the gloves off up against bombs, machine-guns, and what not, it is asking for trouble. A. J. never got a scratch. Also he never got decorated, though he had deserved to be more than once. It always chanced there was nobody looking or, if anyone was, he got mopped up next minute. Also he still missed promotion, although he came very near attaining it by leaps and bounds on one occasion. After strenuous service in the trenches he found himself in a rest camp at the same time as one William Wells of the Royal Artillery, who was employing his repose by giving lessons in the noble art, wherein he was an expert, and occasionally giving aspirants a turn. One such aspirant, Alfred James, made things hum so much for Billy Wells that that amiable pugilist forgot for a moment his natural tender-heartedness and knocked A. J. out of the ring and into oblivion with one and the same punch. Nevertheless, the contest had been witnessed by a sporting Colonel who was so delighted with the show A. J. had put up that he determined there and then on getting him transferred to his battalion, and, moreover, on making him a sergeant at the earliest possible opportunity. Next morning, however, that Colonel was moved to the front, whilst A. J. remained with his unit wondering, as he savagely masticated his breakfast, whether it was his left jaw or his right temple that was dislocated.

Quite possibly, too, the request for a transfer might have been resisted. Thanks to his linguistic abilities, Private Alfred James was too good a man to lose. By that time he had learnt not only to 'talk furrin,' but to speak French—*poilu* French, *bien entendu*, and that, on occasion, is of more value than the exalted language of Voltaire or even *Le Figaro*. He came in for quite a lot of unauthorised money that way: his unfortunate capacity for impecuniosity got through it.

He wrote regularly to Alice, sometimes on those puzzle-postcards, 'I am well!' 'I am in hospital!' 'I am dead!' and so forth, sometimes long letters, concluding with the regulation formal hope that it found her well as it left him. Alice's replies were regular, though obviously by another hand, and filled with scriptural allusions and benedictions that, alas, were 'furrin' to A. J. Nevertheless he kissed these letters and adorned his full-page replies with galaxies of crosses.

Death and change were more busy than usual during those four years. A. J.'s unit was constantly getting disintegrated and renewed. One night, somewhere in France, some date in 1917, his unit got so completely disintegrated that he was about the only whole man left. As a result he was attached to another unit, which unit was on the point of being moved to Italy to stiffen the 'blinkin' Eytalians.' Much to its surprise, the battalion found the Italians an uncommonly stiff-backed lot who welcomed the extra starch with courtesy, but without enthusiasm. They would have preferred a backing of their own countrymen. All honour to them! Just after the arrival of A. J. and battalion, however, a little time came along when they were glad of any backing that would not go back.

On that occasion A. J. might have got the V.C. had his exploit been properly represented. He himself was quite unconscious of doing anything in particular, and, as soon as it was done, became unconscious of everything owing to the incidence of a glancing splinter of shrapnel on his tin hat. Simultaneously the inactive star-part of the show elected to do a faint. When he came round he was comfortably tucked away in a field hospital at the base, whilst A. J. at the front was by assiduous ablution reducing the lump on his head to a size that would fit his helmet.

Capricious fate again! She had saved his life but spoiled him of reward. Apart from this incident, things went very much the same way as before, except that the surroundings, instead of being deadly desolate, were wildly beautiful, and A. J.'s linguistic achievements, instead of being in French, were in Italian, the worst kind of Italian. Talk of Billingsgate! Hear a Piedmontese at work! He has the whole catalogue of saints and their peculiarities at his disposal, and he exploits them to the best disadvantage.

It was just about the last shell fired on that front that did A. J. in. It did not kill him—there is no cause for alarm; it did not wound him; it did not even break anything. It just made a direct hit on the earth inconveniently near and forthwith discharged its surroundings, including Alfred James, several feet upwards. He started on his ascent a splendidly knit specimen of man; he came down incohesive (if there is not such a word in the dictionary there ought to be!), a mere skinful of rattled bones. Now a jolt of that kind often puts a man down and out longer than a severe wound. Moreover, the incident took place at dusk, and A. J. was so completely buried that he was not found till the following morning, half-

frozen and more than half-suffocated. It is unnecessary to add that the fighting was over long before Alfred James was in fettle to take the field again. In fact, what with pneumonia, shock, etc., he had not regained his pristine vigour till the spring of 1919, and not even then, quite.

Meantime he had learned Italian, much better Italian, under much more advantageous circumstances. Women are, as a rule, more efficient and much more agreeable teachers than men, especially when they are young and pretty. Nay! There is no love story budding. For Alfred James there was but one love in the world: that was his sister, Alice. Nevertheless, he did not fail to make himself agreeable to his kind nurses. It was indeed on their account that he substituted Jackimo for his family name of James, of which, it must be admitted, the ministering angels made an awful mess.

With his discharge—he had only joined up for the Duration—he found himself entitled to considerable arrears of pay, which he took, and a Temporary Disability Pension, which he declined, recommending the Pension Department to give it to some other poor fellow, or widow, a communication which probably constitutes an official record. Then he began to sit up and take notice.

The average French peasant is industrious and thrifty. The average English workman is—ahem! The Italian is about half-way between the two, though, like the Irishman, he puts in his best work outside his own country. The attitude of the Italian in a strange land appealed to A. J. Moreover, the pasturages along Clitumnus, where 'grazes the milk-white steer' (*vide* Pliny, likewise Macaulay), seemed more attractive than the New Cut, 'purple Apennine' than Hampstead Heath, and 'the green steepes where Anio leaps in floods of milk-white foam' than Barking Creek. He decided on the rôle of the Italian, or rather of the Italian in exile, for an exile in very truth he was.

Why an exile? Why, with all his affection for Alice, with as many chances of home-leave as the rest, had he never returned to Blighty? The answer comes straight as a bullet from *John Bull*: Bag bashed on bobby's boco.

If the assaulted constable had been dead certain he had spotted A. J. amongst the batch of newly joined recruits, A. J. was no less certain he had been spotted by the constable. Unaware of the patriotic outlook of the sergeant, he had concluded that his immunity from arrest was a bit of blinkin' luck. Also he was convinced that

return to his native land would mean 'time.' Tales of the patience and acumen of the police obsessed his troubled mind. It never occurred to him that the magnificent specimen of manhood, overtopping the dreaded constable by one inch and out-chesting him by two, was not readily recognisable as the somewhat lanky, loose-limbed bag-basher of five years before.

Other considerations entered. Living in Italy was relatively cheap. The cities to the dainty traveller may appear occasionally unfragrant, but then the dainty traveller is unaware of the possibilities of Bethnal Green in that line. A. J. had quite a reasonably remunerative billet offered him at quite a considerable hotel as factotum, interpreter, chucker-out, assistant-shover, etc. He decided forthwith to become for the nonce an Italian. He again changed his name, this time for the convenience of his temporary compatriots, from Alfred James to A. Giacomo, or rather, phonetically, to A. Jackimo, so that for the purposes of this story he remains A. J. He settled down in a tolerably comfortable billet on a tolerably comfortable salary. He wrote to Alice.

In his letter he expatiated on the beauty and comfort of Italy compared with those of East London, and, stepping delicately as an Athenian towards his objective, he suggested that it would be delightful if she would come out and make her home with him.

Alice's reply was that she was very comfortable where she was, thank you, with a rider that she did wish he would come home again. It was not expressed in that way—of course not—but that was what it meant, with this modification, that the intention of stopping at home was final, and the suggestion as to the desirability of his returning home was, well, a suggestion.

A. Jackimo was hurt. He had no reason to be, really. There is a wide difference between the ages of seven and seventeen, and, until hard times came, Alice scarcely knew anything of her big brother. He was generally out of the house before she was out of her cot and not back till after she was asleep, Sundays excepted, and then he was seldom in. After the smash he was chiefly associated in her childish mind with decreasing nutriment and increasing discomfort, seasoned by a flow of words which even in her sheltered life she had come to recognise as very wicked indeed. She did not recognise that his imprecations were alternate railings at his own incapacity and rough petitions to Heaven for help in her extremity.

A. J. was hurt. He took the blow philosophically to all appearance. He reverted, however, to his parent tongue, always a certain

TO YTI2REVINU
YNA9ELI MOTONH2AW

sign of agitation. He said, 'Pore kid. She doesn't tumble. Wyte till I comes and tykes her away in my blinkin' limehouseen,' and thereafter sought surcease of sorrow in accentuating his capacity for impecuniosity in a liquid manner. Here enters tragedy.

He wandered aimlessly into the town and suddenly stopped dead before a brightly illuminated notice. Thus it read, in English and Italian: 'Boxing Saloon. Instructor, Professor Alexander Duncan.' A. J.'s first expression was 'Blime!' his second an aside that no blinkin' Jock ever could box, a third a modification that he might just possibly be qualified to teach blinkin' Italians.

True, he had some respect for Italians as boxers. He had met one or two of some repute in the East End, but in their veins flowed the blood of a more ancient race which has sent stars into the ring from the time of Mendoza downwards. He hesitated, then went in. Fate, it might have seemed, had renewed her down on him that night.

He came to two swift conclusions: (1) that if Alexander Duncan were Scotch, he came from Glasgow. A. J., however, queried both name and nationality; A. D. looked a wrong 'un all along the line; (2) that, whatever his nationality, he was his, A. J.'s meat. A glance at the assembly brought a third conclusion—he did not like the looks of the man on his right.

There was nothing exactly repellent about his appearance. He was shortish, slightish, and wore tinted glasses. Careful examination would have showed that the nose on which the glasses were worn was not European, that the cheek-bones below the tinted lenses were not European, that the grey hair that straggled from under his hat was that of a man of seventy, whilst the hands protruding from his sleeves were half that age. These significant points escaped the notice of A. J. All he knew was that he regarded his next-door neighbour with much the same feelings as a certain student of Christ Church, Oxford, regarded the worthy Doctor Fell in the decade 1670–1680. He did not love him. On the other hand, it was obvious that the neighbour was, at least, interested in A. J.

Mutual inspection was interrupted by the Professor. He had finished an exhibition spar with a dud antagonist and was indulging in a vainglorious harangue to his audience, concluding with a wish he could meet some one who really could extend him. All this in execrable and much-interlarded Italian, largely unintelligible to the assembly, but unfortunately only too intelligible to Jackimo, hotel

servant. A. J., in fact, arose, took off his uniform coat and waistcoat, his shirt and shoes, and expressed his willingness to have a little go just for the fun of the thing.

He meant no harm. He had taken a mighty dislike for the Professor, but he was the last man to let down a fellow—a more or less fellow-countryman—before a lot of blinkin' foreigners. He had resolved, in fact, that he would get a shade the worst of all three rounds. All might have gone well had not the Professor's not wholly inexperienced eye convinced him that he was up against it. As they shook hands he whispered, 'Play light, and I'll give you a jimmy,' whereto A. J., who was as incorruptible as Robespierre, replied in a hiss, 'Sy that again and I'll blinkin' well aht yer,' whereupon the Professor swung for the jaw as they were stepping back.

It was a foul stroke and it landed too high to be effective, nevertheless it was hard enough to hurt A. J. Half a second later the Professor found himself extended in a way he had not anticipated—flat on his back on the floor. He was unaware of that for a count of about a thousand, because he had not known what hit him. Then it was that the man with the coloured blinkers took the floor.

He dismissed the congregation, all but A. J., who, overcome with remorse at the lowering of British prestige in the downfall of the Professor, was busily engaged in endeavouring to restore him with cold water down the back. Goggles came along with restoratives down the throat, a treatment much more to the Professor's taste. He sat up and began to talk—to talk to A. J. Goggles interrupted, and on the spot A. J. recognised that the Professor was afraid of Goggles, deadly afraid. Anyway, all became peace, with profit in the near future. A match was to be fixed up between A. J. and the Professor, knock-outs barred by an agreement specially agreeable to the Professor, the decision to be a draw, a resolution specially disagreeable to Goggles, who was obviously on the make. A. J. was adamant. He was not going to let down anyone who backed him. All he agreed to was to set the Professor on his feet again in pocket and credit, and to accept compensation for so doing.

Next morning he awoke with a head that ached, a thirst that all the waters of Anio could not have quenched, and the consciousness that he had somehow made a blinkin' fool of himself. He had some recollections of a somewhat hectic evening, of being introduced to a meeting of some society, of signing a paper of membership on the assurance that wealth in abundance would soon

be his for so doing, of Goggles introducing himself as Signor Cadrona, president. It may be remarked incidentally that Signor Cadrona's real name more probably ended in 'ski' or 'tch.' A. J., moreover, remembered somehow a vision of Alice's face among the rapidly duplicating lights. It was that which distressed him most of all. On the top of that came a reflection on the very sudden effect of a drink taken immediately after signing the paper. Gradually he arrived at the realisation that he had been trapped, fooled, and drugged, a realisation that made him very, very cross indeed.

He managed to carry out his duties, somewhat feverishly it is true, throughout the day, and in the evening started down to the saloon, rather more feverishly, to carry out item one of his programme. Item one was to knock Duncano's blinkin' head off his blinkin' shoulders.

Stay! Duncano? The blighter's name was Duncan. Whence the 'o'? Not from Duncan, because that gentleman later in the evening had, in a fit of exuberance, admitted his name was Kelly. Yes. It was that blinkin' Cadrona. That astute individual had perceived clearly quite early in the evening that A. J. had recognised that he was, at any rate, not Italian, and had sought to lend artistic verisimilitude to his pretensions by ending every doubtful word with 'o.' W. S. Gilbert has written in 'The Yeoman of the Guard' that life and death may hang on a 'heigh-ho.' Cadrona's 'o' was not less pregnant of tragedy. A. J. was a Gallio in this respect. He was thinking how he would make Goggles 'o' acquainted 'o' with the toe 'o' of his boot 'o.'

He had not far to seek. The great square, or rather piazza, of the city is lozenge-shaped—the place will readily be recognised by people who have been there. At the tip of the lozenge nearest A. J.'s hotel was an erect and stately electric standard. Close to the foot of the standard was an Italian policeman not less erect and ever so much more stately. Close to the policeman were Cadrona and the Professor. A. J. at once recognised that an interview on the lines he had proposed to himself was out of the question, that an interview of any kind was undesirable. He contented himself with standing on the kerb and glowering.

His glowering revealed two, nay, three, little sidelights, all of them interesting: (1), that the Professor was 'compact of' blue funk and impotent wrath; (2) that he was always trying to break away from the neighbourhood of the policeman; (3) that Cadrona was always heading him back. This puzzled A. J. more than a bit.

Finally, the Professor made a break in good earnest, right across the road and into an open saloon on the far side. There he plumped himself down into a chair and glared defiantly. Cadrona laughed and walked quietly up to A. J.

'That citizen there,' he said, jerking his head in the direction of the Professor, 'is likely to get himself into trouble. Meanwhile, I have been expecting you. You wish to speak to me. I wish to speak to you. Very well, let us talk.'

With that he sat down on a bench close to the electric standard, that is to say, close to the policeman. A. J., dazed, sat down beside him.

'What's the matter with him?' he asked.

'That,' returned Cadrona, contemptuously. 'That. Oh! The man is a liar and a coward, and I have found him out. When he joined that society——'

'Hush,' interposed A. J., with a quick glance at the policeman, who, as it chanced, was looking the other way. He was not very clear of the nature of the Articles of Association to which he had stuck his moniker, but he was quite certain that they were not intended for police consumption.

'Idiot!' observed Cadrona calmly. 'Where can we talk more safely than under the nose of a policeman, provided we keep clear of his ears? When that boaster joined us he was bragging about his strength, swore he could fell an ox——'

'Him!' snorted A. J. 'He couldn't hit a dint in a pat of butter.'

'Exactly. You exposed him last night. He does not love you for that. And now that he is called upon to exercise that strength, just in a little simple matter, he shies. Ah, that is his third glass. He is working himself up. He would like to hand you over to the police, but he has nothing to bring against you. He would like to betray me, but that might be too dangerous. It would be sad if he did—for him. For treason there is only one penalty, in all ages, in all countries, in all societies such as ours. Ah, he is going.' Cadrona got up and looked across the road under his hand. 'Ah, well. I hope he will not get himself into trouble. Now for yourself.'

He reseated himself.

'Now for yourself. I do not think you are suited for our society, and I am prepared to return you the document you signed and release you from your obligations on one consideration.' With

that he drew a paper from his breast. 'Nay, my friend,' he continued, 'do not attempt to possess yourself of it. If the police found it on you the consequences might be serious.'

'What about yourself? Nice bright thing to go and shove it right under that fellow's eyes. Are you balmy, or what?'

Cadrona laughed softly.

'My very good friend, I am an accredited agent of the police of Italy. Ah! You start. It is a good idea, is it not? I venture to flatter myself it is original. You see, if I am found in suspicious society, well, I am there in the execution of my duty; if the police contemplate an arrest, I have notice in time and, well, there is no one to be arrested. Again, if any member of my flock proves restive, I call the attention of the police to him, and he becomes quiet.'

A. J.'s lips tightened ominously.

'So,' he said, 'you play the double-cross, do you?'

For one moment Cadrona was in deadly peril. All the other lambs in his flock were of the 'wanted' class, and he could bluff them down. Not so this great, honest Englishman of stainless character. Cadrona was something of a thought-reader, and in the mind of A. J. he read a rapidly ripening resolve to collar him and carry him off to the police headquarters. Just at that moment his lucky star intervened.

His lucky star was an outcry on the far side of the road, an outcry of most sinister import. Upon the sound foot-passengers stopped and turned, tramcars pulled up, loungers left their seats and ran. They all ran in one direction, a side-turning off the main street. Among the latter were A. J. and Cadrona.

A. J. outran Cadrona. Had he looked over his shoulder he would have observed that the little man did not turn down the side street, but walked past it.

'Whew,' he observed, wiping his forehead. 'That was a narrow shave. I must bring that hulking Englishman to heel before I see him again, or else—but, no, he may be of great use.'

A. J. meantime followed the crowd down the side street, then into a narrower turning, then into another where they were brought up all standing. Over their heads, some ten rows in front, A. J. could distinguish a couple of policemen keeping back the crowd. Now the ways of an Italian policeman differ from those of an English constable, and the front rank was by way of becoming an exceedingly unhealthy place. Nevertheless he wanted to get there, and get there he did, at any rate, near enough to see what he

felt he would see. It was the body of a man lying face downward, and under his left shoulder-blade was the hilt of a stiletto. A. J. recognised it as that of the Professor. Cadrona had signed his death-warrant when he got up and looked across the road with shaded eyes.

A. J. backed out and took his departure without assistance from the police. He was feeling sick, and hot, and thirsty, but these discomforts were forgotten in one dominant idea. That was to find Cadrona, wring his neck whenever and wherever found, and chance the consequences. He had quite an exciting man-hunt for a couple of hours, and at last returned to his hotel *apraktos*, which is Greek for 'nothin' doin'.' He man-hunted every spare hour for the next two weeks, with the same result. He searched highways and byways and low ways, very low ways, unsuccessfully. As his disappointment increased, his discretion, never very great, minimised. Quite a lot of people got to know he was looking for one Cadrona, including Cadrona himself, and that from A. J.'s own mouth. Cadrona, however, minus wig and glasses and in garb ecclesiastic, was not readily recognisable as Goggles 'o.' At their parting Cadrona gave him his benediction. He had a sense of humour, had Cadrona. At the end of a fortnight A. J. received an intimation that, in his native tongue, 'he had better blinkin' well cheese it.'

That intimation took the form of a domiciliary visit from the police. Its purport was that Alfred James, locally known as Alfredo Giacomo, and signing himself A. Jackimo, had been, for the past few days, frequenting suspicious places and associating with suspicious characters, together with sundry details which convinced A. J. that he had been shadowed all the time. This realisation, together with the fact that the visit had come nigh to costing him his billet, choked him off man-hunting. Also his capacity for impecuniosity had not been eased by the chase. His exchequer was, in fact, on the other side of nothing; in other words, he had borrowed on his next instalment of wages.

With the following morning came welcome pecuniary relief, accompanied by a short but peculiarly unwelcome note, typed and unsigned. Thus it ran. 'You have been a fool, but it is hoped have learned sense by now. Hold yourself in readiness.'

A. J. said several things, but they did not mend matters. He felt helpless as a fly in the web of a spider. His first inclination was to take Alice's advice—do a bunk to England and stop there. He

was restrained by two considerations: (1) that the *douceur* was not sufficient to carry him there; (2) a strong conviction that he would never get out of Italy alive. Herein he was probably correct.

Within next week came the summons. It was simple and to the point. Cadrona would call for him that afternoon at 2.30 in a taxi, and at 2.30 that afternoon Cadrona called. The colossal impudence of the man took all the fight out of A. J. He felt he was up against it, and he would see it through come what might, but he knew he was a beaten man from the start. In his extremity he put up a petition to Heaven for Alice that would have shocked every denomination in Great Britain. A. J., nevertheless, it relieved wonderfully. He lit a cigarette and settled himself beside Cadrona in the taxi as carelessly as if he had been starting on a joy ride.

The route ran up a wild and beautiful valley in the limestone mountains behind the city. Had it been in Merry England the road would assuredly have been properly dressed. There would also have been a tea-house or two, perhaps a hostelry, a picture-postcard stall for an absolute certainty, with an occasional Yellow Peril from a manufacturing town sixty miles away. As it was, the surface was execrable, and of human life or habitation there was not a sign.

After about five miles the road became a track, and here Cadrona and A. J. detaxied. The chauffeur remained behind. A. J. seemed to remember having seen his face before. He had, by the light of duplicating candles. As they turned to go, Cadrona called back that they would not be long, but that if he did not return the chauffeur would know what to do.

The track crawled steeply up the mountain side amidst thick timber. Twice on the way up A. J. spotted an unpleasant-looking man lurking with an unpleasant-looking gun. They lurked very visibly, the kind of lurking that advertises itself like a poster. A. J. recognised without much exhaustion of mental energy that his life was being held in the crook of a trigger all the way.

Beyond the woodlands the route lay along a barren upland by the side of a deep ravine. All at once Cadrona stopped.

'See,' he said, 'that is curious.'

It was. Down in the rift, some seventy feet below them, a waterfall spouted, seemingly out of the live rock, and went flashing and dancing down the channel. Above, the bed of the fissure was dry, moulded into curiously fretted slabs of limestone which were

here and there spotted with *débris* from the cliffs above and the branches and leaves of trees that found a precarious foothold on the vertical sides. A. J. assented that it was curious, and made no further comment. He was not in the mood to ask questions. There was that in Cadrona's tone which had caused a sudden uncontrollable feeling of emptiness in the region of the belt. He came very near to being afraid.

'Come on,' said Cadrona. 'I have something more curious still to show.'

They walked on for a mile or more, and again Cadrona halted. 'Look,' he said.

The stream had reappeared. The ravine resembled one of those which may be seen in the Craven district of Yorkshire, a miniature cañon worn by a beck through the soft limestone. The rift here was, perhaps, a hundred feet deep by forty wide, and the cliffs quite sheer, waterworn and undercut at the base. One feature was remarkable though by no means unique. About twenty yards below where A. J. stood the water disappeared under a wide limestone archway to pursue a subterranean course till it burst out at the waterfall lower down. In general shape and size the arch resembled Goyden Pot in Nidderdale, though A. J. had never heard of the place, and would not have cared if he had. Cadrona's words were occupying his attention to the exclusion of all other considerations.

'You have now,' he was saying, 'the choice between wealth and your freedom from our society and a very unpleasant and lingering death. Three disobedient members have been lowered into that rift, and once there, escape is impossible. If you look up the stream you will note that the exit in that direction is blocked by a cascade which is entirely unclimbable. We know that. It is most entertaining to watch the efforts of the prisoners to scale it. Still they struggle and fight until they at last drop from cold and exhaustion, and are either drowned or else perish on some exposed slab. Then, when the first flood comes, they are washed away underground and are no more seen. We always select a time when the water is low for the experiment, so that the criminal may have full opportunity of realising the magnitude of his offence—and—that others may be impressed. Oh, and I had almost forgotten. We invariably slit the culprit's tongue before lowering him, in case he should attract unwelcome attention.'

The words were spoken deliberately, unemotionally, in a horrible

manner calculated to chill the courage of the most heroic. A. J. quailed.

'What do you want me to do?' he demanded sullenly.

'Do? What that blatant braggart, Duncano, undertook but shirked. He who said he could fell an ox with a blow of his fist——'

'Him!' interposed A. J., varying to the other extreme. 'He couldn't hit a dint in a pat of butter.'

Cadrona inclined his head. He had heard those words before. 'True. He lied. More, he proved himself a coward, a coward first, then a traitor. He paid the penalty. You saw!' A. J. wilted. His every movement seemed to have been marked. 'Still much valuable time was lost. You had to be brought to heel for the purpose. Much valuable time was lost.'

This was true enough. When Cyril Barnard came to Italy, Cadrona had been notified of the arrival of an extremely undesirable alien. Cadrona, after due inquiry made, had agreed as to the undesirability of Cyril Barnard. He decided on his removal, his permanent removal, employing, if possible, a British agent for the purpose as more likely to get there, for Barnard was a wary bird. The Professor's hesitation and final defection had caused much unfortunate delay, during which Cyril Barnard had been unpleasantly active. His activities, indeed, had been such that Cadrona had decided that there was no room for him and Barnard in the same world. Which, by the way, was exactly Barnard's view. Of all this A. J. knew nothing. His innermost soul was in revolt against the phrase 'brought to heel.' It was so painfully true.

'What do you want me to do?' he repeated impatiently.

'Nothing much. Just one blow from your strong right arm, and strike the man downwards and outwards, as you Englishmen say. Only, my friend, understand that it must be outwards for eternity.'

'What, kill him?' gasped A. J., admirably astounded. The question sounded idiotic. It was not. A. J. had guessed what was coming and was sparring for wind. He had no mind to be let in for murder.

'Yes,' sneered Cadrona, 'kill him. You who have fought through four years of war know what killing means. Cheer up, my brave Englishman. There is no danger.'

A. J. took no heed of the gibe. He had got his mental wind by now. His strong right arm would fulfil its task. It would knock his man 'outwards,' but, well, if the blow landed a bit too high and

fatal consequences did not ensue, it would be no fault of his. He would have done his part and——'

'And,' concluded Cadrona, 'recollect if the blow fails of its purpose, it will be just the same, so far as you are concerned, as if you had betrayed the society.'

A. J. was gravelled. He felt himself being worked into a corner. He fainted.

'Well. Who is it, anyway?' he grumbled. 'I got to know what I'm up against.'

'No one to be frightened of. He is tall, slight, and walks with a limp. His office is at the British Consulate, and he is to be seen between there and the police offices several times a day. That should identify him.'

This speech contained two mistakes. The word 'British' A. J. noted and pigeon-holed; the other point was more important.

'So that's the gyme, is it? Me knock him out in the street and get copped for it. Get rid of us both at one pop. Not much, Mr. blinkin' Goggles.'

He made more use of the ring.

'What's his name?' he demanded. Cadrona hesitated. Hesitation on A. J.'s part he dared not risk. Danger was too close. A. J. might make difficulty about doing in a fellow-countryman, and there was no one to take his place. Camouflage was essential. Cadrona fell back on his taste for artistic nomenclature, the convincing, final 'o.'

'His name. Oh, Barnardo.'

Scientists try to believe that they can estimate the 'teenth part of a second it takes for an impression to reach the brain, for the brain to record the impression, for the muscles to respond. All these happen in somewhere less than no time. That was just about the period occupied by A. J. in the following reflection: 'Barnardo. Him as took in my little Alice!' and then the muscles of his strong right arm had responded. Simultaneously Cadrona saw enough in his face to send his hand to his pocket like a flash, but it would have required a mighty quick flash to draw a gun whilst A. J.'s right was coming across in a hurry. Cadrona, accompanied by an undischarged automatic, disappeared over the edge of the ravine.

A. J. strolled to the verge.

'They can only shoot me, after all,' was his comment. 'I may as well see what's happened to the perishin' blighter.'

The perishing blighter had perished. The corpse—there was

no mistaking that it was a corpse—had hitched up between a tree and the wall of the cliff half-way down.

'Well,' reflected A. J., 'if I have to go, I'll have done one good job, anyway.'

He stood up, a fair mark on the skyline, but no shot came from near-by hollow or boulder. A. J. recognised that for once Cadrona had neglected his supports.

Exactly how long it took A. J.'s mind to formulate: 'If I go back by the path I shall be blinkin' well sniped,' may be left to scientists. So also may the realisation that the town was right below him, with nothing but some three miles of grass slope intervening. Campaigning on the Austrian frontier had familiarised A. J. with mountain sides. He took that slope as if he had been a Lakeland record-breaker, hit a tram-head exactly as the right tram for the right place was starting, and within an hour was in the hall of the British Consulate inquiring tempestuously for Signor Barnardo. Fate had modified her 'down.'

Cyril Barnard heard the tumult through the doorway of his office—a closed door that day meant death by suffocation—and stepped into the hall. Then he stopped. Confronting the somewhat aged porter was an Italian hotel servant, No. 1 size, with Anglo-Saxon features, expressing himself in fluent English after the 'scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe' (A. J. was excited).

Barnard touched his elbow.

'Look here,' he said. 'My name's Barnard, if that's——'

Again he stopped. The stalwart figure came to the salute with military accuracy and precision, then flung out two glad hands towards him like a child to its nanny.

'Lor' bless yer, sir,' it said, huskily. 'I must bless yer and thank yer. I must. I must.' And thereon followed an unintelligible and emotional babble about Alice, and little sister, and homes. By and bye the situation cleared. It was affecting, perhaps a little ludicrous. A. J. was intensely disappointed to find that Cyril Barnard was not the 'humble believer' who had for years slept in his honoured grave at Ilford, but concealed his chagrin out of consideration for Barnard. Barnard was a good deal amused at having been mistaken for that great man whom he would have given his ears to resemble, but concealed his feelings out of consideration for Alfred James Jackimo. Then the latter broke fresh ground.

'But it wasn't that I come to tell, sir. I come to say I just done in that blinkin' Bolshie, Cadrona.'

'What's that?' snapped Barnard. 'Don't talk. Come in here, man. This may be desperately important. Now, shut the door.'

A. J. obeyed and came to attention. Barnard slapped himself into a chair after the manner of a president of a court martial.

'Now then,' he said. 'Quick. What has happened? In as few words as possible.'

A. J. came back to discipline. He stood rigidly and spoke concisely. There were quick questions and clear answers. Then Barnard picked up the telephone and spoke excitedly for perhaps half a minute. After which he became human again. He looked curiously at A. J.

'I seem to have seen you before,' he began. 'You were through the war, were you not? Yes. And you fought on the Austrian frontier? Yes. You were at——' naming a certain place and date. 'Yes. Do you remember anything special happening there?'

'Can't say that I do, sir,' replied A. J. 'It was hot enough whilst it lasted, but, lor', how they did run at the finish. They can't face the steel——'

Barnard interrupted him with some impatience not unmingled with disappointment.

'But can't you recollect anything very special, some particular incident?'

A. J. relaxed his military attitude and sought inspiration in scratching his head.

'Can't say as——. Oh, yes. There were three Austrians out to bayonet one of our officers who'd been hit, and I,' with a grin, 'ventured to interfere. What happened I can't quite say, because a bit of shrapnel got me on my tin hat.'

'I can tell you exactly what happened. You shot one, bayoneted another, and broke the head of the third with his own rifle.'

'Bless me, sir, so I did, now I come to think of it. You seem to know a lot about it, though how——'

'I was that officer,' said Barnard, with great emotion, rising and holding out his hand. 'Man, I owe you—— Oh! Come in.'

It was the Chief Constable of the city. He acknowledged Barnard and turned sharply on A. J.

'What's this man doing here?' he demanded.

'What. You know him?'

'Certainly. He is Giacomo, employed at the Royal Hotel.

Reputed English. Of late he has been associating with suspicious persons.'

'He has, indeed,' broke in Barnard, with a burst of laughter. 'That's why I sent for you.'

(It is regrettable to narrate that at this point A. J.'s broad shoulders shook with a respectfully suppressed guffaw. It is still more regrettable to relate that the Chief Constable subsequently squared A. J. to keep eternally locked in his bosom the fact that the Anarchist president and the accredited police agent were one and the same person.)

Two minutes later A. J. was 'for it' under a fusillade of questions. There was not much he could tell the police they did not know, but that little was important. Then the Chief Constable monopolised the telephone, and, like Moloch, gave 'sentence for open war,' i.e. 'posses' of armed police. They manage things better abroad. Over here, when a policeman goes to arrest a desperate scoundrel the scoundrel shoots the policeman; out there, the policeman shoots the desperado—which is 'saving commonsense.'

'There, that's done,' said the Chief Constable. 'There's one thing more. This man, Giacomo.'

'James,' interposed A. J., proudly and finally reverting to his nationality. The Chief Constable did not trust himself with the pronunciation.

'This man must be arrested and put in gaol.'

'Well, of all the blinkin'——' began A. J. in hot expostulation.

'My friend,' interrupted the Chief Constable, 'if news of your exploit has reached the city, your life in the streets would not be worth five minutes' purchase. No, you must go to gaol. I promise you shall not be inconvenienced.'

That night the wires all over Italy, ay, and as far distant as Paris and London, were busy, for on Cadrona's body was found his private ledger, containing the names and domiciles of his chief colleagues, codes, details, etc., etc., the result of all which was a proper round-up. It never got into the papers, because even in England there exist patriots who always side with their country's enemies and boost petitions against the suppression of vermin.

Of these happenings A. J. recked nothing. The Governor of the gaol had been told to treat him as an honoured guest. One must entertain a guest, and to entertain a guest one must entertain, in the same way, oneself. Then there was the Deputy-Governor, who was called in to do honour. The amount of good stuff debited on

A. J.'s account during his residence was, well, almost as much as three men could get through.

Thereafter Alfred James found himself a comparatively rich man. In three great countries there were considerable rewards for the apprehension of Cadrona (whose Christian (?) name incidentally did end in 'tch' and his pedigree name in 'ski'), and lesser ones for minor offenders. All these poured into A. J.'s pocket. He was not elated. 'I shall run through the lot before the year is out,' he confided to Cyril Barnard.

'Very well. I'll invest it for you. The interest will give you quite a nice little fall-back. Now what about yourself?'

A long heart-to-heart talk ensued, which concluded in Barnard suggesting that A. J. could not do better than join the constabulary. That flattened out A. J. Followed another heart-to-heart talk and the revelation of the incident of the 'Boco-Bashed-Bobby.' Barnard grinned.

'I don't think,' he commented, 'that after all these years there is much chance of your being recognised, for one thing, and, in any case, you have done enough here to wipe out a gross of burglaries, which sentiment is, I suppose, utterly immoral. What is moral, however, is that you as a policeman will be engaged in protecting property instead of—er—trifling with it. I suppose you could qualify as regards writing and so forth.'

He seemed to take it for granted A. J. would join the Force, and A. J. had no objection. A few days later A. J. set out by boat—inland travelling in Italy was deemed unsafe for him—*en route* for Marseilles with fifty Treasury notes in his pocket, which Barnard (liar) represented as an uninvested surplus from the rewards. He also bore a testimonial from Barnard, who, it is needless to say, was not wholly unknown to Scotland Yard, as to his capacity for speaking and interpreting both Italian and French of the non-classical type. His last instructions were that he was to go straight to Scotland Yard before visiting Alice. Barnard was a wise man, and foresaw that complications might arise if A. J. revisited the haunts of his youth after some five years' exile with fifty pounds in his pocket.

Fate had relinquished her 'down' on him, but could not resist a sporting dig by way of farewell. A. J., attired in all the majesty of blue, went to take instruction from a sergeant and got a shock. The Bashed and the Basher, after long years, came unexpectedly face to face, and the recognition was mutual. It is to the credit of

the sergeant that he held his tongue : it is more to the credit of A. J. that he did not hold his. There and then he blurted out his story, and thereby sent up his stock to somewhere above par in the sergeant's eyes. The next day he was allowed to visit Alice.

There is no need to describe that meeting. The child was at first a little scared at her great policeman brother, but very soon she was sitting on his knee with one arm round his neck, like a little lover. Suddenly she was displaced, almost with violence. The 'gub'nor' chanced to enter the room, to be immediately overwhelmed. The interview concluded in this sort :

'You've got to take them, sir'—'them' being fifty pounds in notes. 'You must, or I'll chuck them into the Thames, I will, straight.' A. J. was getting excited. 'There may be another little girl like my little Alice wanting shelter to-night.'—And the gub'nor took the notes.

He took them gladly, and the gladness seemed to get into his voice. He found himself singing cheerily. Truly, it was a hymn, one of Cowper's, but it rang out gladly enough. 'And,' commented the gub'nor, 'if that is not a mysterious way, I should like to know what is.'

CLAUDE E. BENSON.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: A SKETCH BOOK.

BY PHILIP GUEDALLA.

V. DR. FRANKLIN.

THERE is, as all people except inventors delight to say, nothing new under the sun. Under it, a few years back, the embarrassed Agent-General of Mr. Kipling's imagination—'a patient and expostulating person, visibly torn between the pulling Devil of a rampant Colony, and the placid Baker of a largely uninterested England'—discoursed to an exasperated Colonial (since renamed Dominion) Premier those 'agent-generalities,' which singularly failed to soothe him. And under it, one hundred and forty years earlier, Dr. Franklin, Agent of the provinces of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, and Massachusetts Bay, hovered, a somewhat uncertain dove, over the troubled waters of the American question. He found, alas! no rest for the sole of his foot. Ruffled in every feather by the Lords of the Committee for Plantation Affairs, he became almost un-dovelike, perched for a moment on the awful shoulder of Lord Chatham himself; and then, circling warily over the lobby of the House of Lords and Mrs. Howe's in Grafton Street, he headed for home. The flood had not abated. So far as a pair of sharp eyes could observe it from lodgings in Craven Street, Strand, there was nothing in the temper of the King's ministers to encourage a joyous return, olive branch in hand, across the Atlantic to the labouring ark of Colonial policy. And when the Pennsylvania packet, Captain Osborne, dropped anchor in the Delaware on a May evening in 1775, it brought home a strange emblem of the new national consciousness, aged sixty-nine and with hair that was wearing a little thin now, equally prepared (in the words of a lyric composed for the occasion) to

'fan the flame which Liberty inspires,
Or fix the grand conductor, which shall guide
The tempest back, and 'lectrify their pride,'

the Friend, as the poet observed, of his Country and Mankind; but a sad warning to Agents-General. No Agent-General, one feels, should become a national hero. Yet that was the mournful destiny

of Dr. Franklin. Perhaps his England was a shade less placid than Mr. Kipling's; perhaps his Colony was a thought more rampant. But the problem of that nice adjustment between home-land and colony, which, for all his adroitness, he had failed to effect, remained until yesterday. It was left, indeed, for a less logical generation to discover that for empires, as for philosophers, the golden rule is that there is no golden rule, that the solution of their problem is that it should be left unsolved.

That failure (or that success) is the tall pillar upon which the friendly little figure of Dr. Franklin was raised to starry eminence. Before it, he was merely the sly tradesman with a turn for repartee, who once wrote a sardonic tombstone for

The Body
Of

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
Printer

(Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding).

But after it he became that universal hero, who filled a hundred patriotic perorations, a thousand manuals of self-help; who inspired Lord Brougham to the measured panegyric, which never fails judicial persons upon subjects with which they are imperfectly acquainted; who so pervades a continent that his rapt biographer, observing 'few counties in the Union which have not a town named Franklin,' has looked closer into the detail of his glory and can exclaim that 'few towns of any magnitude . . . do not possess a Franklin street or a Franklin square, a Franklin hotel, a Franklin bank, a Franklin fire-engine, a Franklin lyceum, a Franklin lodge, or a Franklin charitable association.' It is a sobering thought, which might well check a retiring man upon the threshold of a career of public usefulness. But Franklin, if he foresaw, persisted; and so became, by his singular achievement, a patron saint of the Republic, a parent added to the grave company of parents, which history had already provided for that gigantic daughter of the West.

Yet this engaging blend of Ulysses and Uncle Ponderevo was remarkably unlike his age. He seems to stray, a little out of place, across the elegant scene of the Eighteenth Century. The lights were lowered; the curtain rose; and as the violins fell silent, a trim garden came to view, in which a gentleman from Philadelphia

made a strange appearance. The stout figure, the little jokes, the chuckle, the homespun air contrasted oddly with the formal perfection of that background. Slim gentlemen paraded gravely through life on red heels, absorbed in the solemn business of existing ; and Mr. Franklin bustled cheerfully beside them, a sort of universal provider, equally ready to oblige with an Almanac, a printing order, a scientific discovery, or a revolution. It was an age of general accomplishment, when young ladies embroidered with a strange perfection, and even baronets struck the tuneful lyre. Franklin positively was so far influenced by the prevalence of the Muses as to confess a sedate familiarity with the harp, the violin, and the violoncello, and even (with a wilder fancy) to offer instruction to the mother of Leigh Hunt upon the more passionate guitar. But competence, one feels, was rather his mark than virtuosity. For he casts, in that age of artifice, a solid shadow. Even his piety seems to belong to an earlier or to a later time. The sober qualities of the Eighteenth Century, the sudden interruption of that bright brocade with broadcloth, must always appear a strange diversion of the stream. Perhaps they were a throw-back to the Seventeenth, possibly an anticipation of the Nineteenth Century. At any rate they have far more in common with either Cromwell or Queen Victoria than with Mr. Walpole. In this decorous department of his time Franklin played a part. It was a seemly rôle, in which he appeared successively as the thoughtful compositor of Bartholomew Close ; the seeker after truth who presented Mr. J. R. in a *Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, with his '*present Thoughts of the general State of Things in the Universe*,' listed the virtues and composed a creed ; the respected citizen, disseminating useful knowledge or pouring upon his fellow townsmen from a capacious cornucopia the mingled blessings of subscription libraries, street paving, and fire-brigades ; the diplomat in broadcloth, who walked sedately through the gleaming scene where France was governed among the gilt and mirrors of Versailles. Seen in this solemn aspect he seems to stand in queer contrast to his age, a wren among peacocks.

Untrue to his time, he was yet amazingly congruous with his place. In an age when minds took little colour from their place of birth and manners were international, when Prussian kings knew little German and Englishmen chopped French and Frenchmen had English airs, Franklin was almost unbelievably American. Even his minor tastes reflected his distant origin. Did not an

anxious wife provide a busy Colonial Agent beyond the seas in London with those remote, those unforgettable hickory nuts, dried peaches, cranberries, and Indian meal, which told him of wider skies? Bewildered cooks in Craven Street wrestled with the insoluble problem of buckwheat cakes, like English ministers with the problem of taxation; and friendly hostesses received unexpected gifts of American apples, whilst American nuts were bestowed upon their husbands to provoke thoughts of conciliation over the port, and colonial rights were duly safeguarded by the judicious reservation that this tribute was 'small indeed, but *voluntary*.' Below the surface the whole tone of his mind was un-European. It had a quality for which it was not easy to find a name in 1770; since the world had not yet learnt to call it American. The poise of his humour, the dry chuckle of *Poor Richard*, the grave, unwinking comedy of the epitaph, the solemn insistence (extended, with a glorious wealth of measured exaggeration, over four years) upon the mythical death of a rival pamphleteer, these things, which seem as personal as the tone of a voice, can all be rediscovered in the later development of his country's comic literature. It may well be his foremost distinction that, politics and electricity apart, Franklin was the father of American humour. Has not a master of that elusive mode detected as its leading form 'the humour based on that freedom from traditional ideas and conventional views, characteristic of a new country?' By that light American humorists progressed to the clear-eyed simplicity of Hosea Biglow, the calm judgments of untravelled *Innocents*, and the inexhaustible enjoyment afforded by protracted horse-trades. And in the first circles of its illumination Franklin sat writing his Almanacs, with his unmoving features and the slow kindling of his amused, his *goguenard* eye. *Poor Richard* is surely the earliest incarnation of *David Harum*; and his creator spoke with the voice which was to come more fully from the lips of *Tom Sawyer*, Artemus Ward, and the sweet singer of

' John P.
Robinson, he . . . '

One catches the note in a dozen aphorisms—in 'Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead,' or 'Sal laughs at everything you say, why? because she has fine teeth,' in the commercial shrewdness of 'Three Removes is as bad as a Fire,' or that dispassionate diagnosis of the habit of disputation, 'Persons of good sense, I have

since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh.' Each of his dry jokes is a bold variation upon an old theme, an innovation upon English humour, a Declaration of Independence in miniature.

But there is a more significant particular in which his strange quality as a forerunner of American tendencies is manifest. That patient cultivation of the commercial virtues; those 'proverbial sentences, chiefly such as indicated industry and frugality as the means of procuring wealth'; the guide to conduct, which insisted that 'no qualities were so likely to make a poor man's fortune as those of probity and integrity'; all this side of Franklin's busy mind must surely enthrone him as the first high-priest of the religion of efficiency. The flavour of that modern incense penetrates every happy page of the radiant *Autobiography*, in which he held the mirror up to Samuel Smiles. How true to our own tradition is the ostentatious wheelbarrow of 1730: 'To show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores thro' the streets on a wheelbarrow. Thus being esteem'd an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on swimmingly.' That is a wheelbarrow equally, one feels, at home in Philadelphia, the Five Towns, or even Zenith. No Success Editor could pass it by; no correspondence course should omit it. And what modern pen would disdain his judicious advocacy of book-keeping as a feminine accomplishment 'likely to be of more use to them and their children, in case of widowhood, than either music or dancing, by preserving them from losses by imposition of crafty men, and enabling them to continue, perhaps, a profitable mercantile house, with establish'd correspondence, till a son is grown up fit to undertake and go on with it, to the lasting advantage and enriching of the family'? That has the authentic contemporary ring of our own preparation for life, of a hundred courses of business training, a thousand handbooks of commercial efficiency. More modern still (and still more true to his environment) was Franklin's taste for friends in council. Its first seed was sown in the Society of the Free and Easy and in that United Party for Virtue which he longed to form. But its flowering was in the Junto; that delight of Philadelphia Friday evenings, supplemented in the right season by a monthly meeting at 'some proper place across the river for bodily exercise.' Twelve members wrestled with first principles in

debate, explored philosophy, and even turned an attentive eye on physics. But a still closer bond united the philosophers; since a standing question on the club's order-paper inquired 'In what manner can the Junto, or any of them, assist you in any of your honourable designs?' The answer, perhaps, lay in that contract for printing forty sheets of the history of the Quakers, which an original member of the Junto procured for the house of Franklin and Meredith. The objects of the club included 'the promotion of our particular interests in business by more extensive recommendation,' all its members 'exerting themselves in recommending business to us.' It was the parent-lodge of a stupendous brood; and, across the gulf of time, one acclaims Franklin as the first Rotarian.

His career for forty years was a model of self-improvement, a steady climb up the long hill that leads to affluence. From the days when a small apprentice delivered damp copies of the *New England Courant* up and down Boston to the closing dignity of his long retirement, Franklin pursued an even course. The Muses beckoned; a dozen hobbies tempted; romance was hovering somewhere out of sight; the universe pressed for an answer to its riddle. But the printer's apprentice printed indefatigably on. He served his time at Boston and again at Philadelphia, plying a busy stick and avoiding, so far as possible, in his life (as on the printed page) those 'great errata,' which he notes so patiently. His principles were sometimes queer. When he worked in London, they called him, from his blameless habits, the 'Water-American' in the printing-house near Lincoln's Inn Fields, where an alehouse boy was in perpetual attendance, and his neighbour at the press required five pints in the course of a normal working day. But Franklin was never a bigot. His austere refusal to subscribe five shillings for the general beer faded before an inexplicable outbreak of misprints in his work, 'all ascribed to the chappel ghost, which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted.' So he paid, 'convinc'd of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually.' Equally reasonable was his vegetarianism, which finally succumbed to a delicious *bouquet* of frying cod on shipboard. The day was calm; and 'it smelt admirably well. I balanc'd some time between principle and inclination, till I recollected that, when the fish were opened, I saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs; then thought I, "If you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you." So I din'd upon cod very heartily. . . . So convenient a thing it is to be a *reasonable creature*, since it enables one to find or make

a reason for everything one has a mind to do.' Once, when in England, he was almost deflected from his course by the graceful accomplishment of swimming. He swam from Chelsea to Blackfriars; enchanted the company by 'many feats of activity, both upon and under water'; and, introducing to their notice a novel style which aimed 'at the graceful and easy as well as the useful,' might have become a swimming-master to the sons of a baronet. Perhaps in Limbo, where Napoleon escapes his fate and is (as he so nearly was) a British sailor, Franklin instructs the nobility in the art of swimming. But he returned to print; and Philadelphia soon recovered a busy citizen. At first trade left him with little time for civic virtue; although in a pamphlet on *The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency* he displayed enthusiasm (natural in a printer) for inflation by a free use of the printing-press. But soon romance had brushed him with her wing. He knew a glazier with an absorbing passion for mathematics. The glazier had a young female relation, 'in herself very deserving.' Inflamed at length by frequent family suppers, Franklin demanded her hand and something in the neighbourhood of one hundred pounds. Her saddened relatives replied that money in such quantities was not available. But the impetuous suitor suggested that 'they might mortgage their house in the loan-office.' His hopes, alas! were unfulfilled. The bright vision faded; and, after similar experiments in other directions, the lovesick youth was left with a sad conviction that 'the business of a printer being generally thought a poor one, I was not to expect money with a wife, unless with such a one as I should not otherwise think agreeable.' But romance died hard; and the impulsive printer, remembering an early love whom he had too lightly left, married at last.

Business progressed; and he attacked, in spare moments, the riddle of the universe, evolving a home-made religion with strictly commercial virtues. Morality having been rendered unduly difficult by the wide range of the perfection which it customarily exacted, he 'judg'd it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time; and when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another.' He even evolved a system of moral book-keeping by double entry, a sort of spiritual audit, which would enable the judicious trader to strike his balances with the Great Accountant. But gradually he was absorbed in civic life. Public activities crowded upon his busy imagination, poured in a wild profusion from the disorderly cornu-

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copia of Daniel Defoe, of whom he was a zealous reader. Hospitals, meeting-houses, street lamps, and schools engaged his active mind. He went from strength to strength, raising fire companies, reforming the watch, exploring that paradise of the amateur, the field of education; until at last, Clerk to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, he moved in a happy blend of public spirit and Government contracts. The tedium of debate was enlivened by the privilege of printing the proceedings, 'and other occasional jobbs for the public, that, on the whole, were very profitable.' At length prosperity, the long pursuit of science, and civic duty, impelled him to retire from trade; and when he left the printing-house in middle life, the public claimed him unresisting.

This singular being made contact at two points with the life of his time. His trace on its letters, although he wrote incessantly, was slight. In prose he was merely workmanlike; and the anthologists have shown little favour to his verse, from the heroic manner of his youth,

'Come all you jolly sailors,
You are so stout and brave;
Come, hearken, and I'll tell you
What happened on the wave. . . .'

in which he celebrated the pirate Blackbeard in broadsheet ballads, to the gnomic perfection of his prime, when he

'governed his passions with absolute sway,'

and versified good advice in Almanacs, or even ingeminated in a less tranquil mood,

'Oh! no!
Not so!
For honest souls know,
Friends and a bottle still bear the bell.'

But in science and in politics his impact was considerable. From his early inventions in the patient manner of the White Knight to his more serious extension of electrical knowledge, his researches disclose the same unpretending, busy person, who once hurried about Philadelphia in pursuit of a printing order. It was an age when science had not yet escaped from an agreeable haze of general ideas into the hard light of specialised investigation; and the scientist could still assume the solemn airs appropriate to the pursuit of the philosopher's stone. But Franklin had little taste for deportment; and the long pursuit of knowledge was conducted

without false solemnity. Even his electricity was unassuming. The mildest Ajax that ever defied the lightning, he rode sedately on the storm. His work was done without affectation, because it interested him ; just as it interested him to devise, when he saw a stove, a better stove ; to design, as he passed a lighthouse, a more ingenious lighthouse ; to project, whilst he watched the House of Commons, a better ventilated House of Commons.

That busy mind found still more to do in politics. He had learnt in General Braddock's camp, where the red-coats lounged in the spring sunshine of 1755, the mysterious distinction between 'your raw American militia' and the King's troops. A queer, distorting mist was slowly rising between the King's Englishmen and his Colonials. First as a leading man in his Province, and later in London, Franklin was sent to grope in it. That his quest for an Anglo-American understanding was, on the whole, sincere is manifest from the positively imperialist ring of his sentiments. Was he not opposed to the restoration of Canada to foreign hands on the strength of a John Bull conviction 'that the foundations of the future grandeur and stability of the British Empire lie in America' ? He drafted a basis for conciliation with Lord Chatham, no enemy of his country. As the dispute developed, he prescribed 'Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One' with the full bitterness of disappointment ; and even when taxation was in the air, when

'We have an old mother that peevish has grown ;
She snubs us like children that scarce walk alone ;
She forgets we're grown up and have sense of our own,'

Franklin could still sing in a loud British voice :

'Know too, ye bad neighbours, who aim to divide
The sons from the mother, that still she's our pride ;
And if ye attack her we're all of her side,
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.'

Deny, alas ! they could and did ; and some part of the denial was to come from Franklin himself. For his diplomacy in London was hardly equal to the strain ; and, in the outcome, events moved faster than argument. Perhaps the absence of the electric telegraph was fatal, or perhaps that majestic movement of British policy—*vera incessu patuit dea*—which made with due deliberation in 1769 the concessions which would, which must have been adequate in

1766, and finally permitted Lord North to introduce his measure of conciliation ten days after a Franco-American alliance had rendered conciliation impossible.

That singular marriage of the young Republic to the French monarchy was the last, and perhaps the greatest, achievement of the old printer. The bride was fair; but, with an experienced bridegroom and no hope of a *dot*, the indomitable matchmaker must sometimes have felt the altar to be almost incredibly distant. The sloop *Reprisal* had run through rough weather from the Delaware to Quiberon Bay in the closing weeks of 1776. They crowded on sail as the King's cruisers chased the rebel through the November gales. But Dr. Franklin kept below; except when his eternal thirst for knowledge brought him on deck to take the ocean temperature and to verify, by these opportune observations, his opinions upon the Gulf Stream. He was in Paris before New Year, after a brisk encounter with Mr. Gibbon on the road, in which the historian declined to 'have any conversation with a revolted subject' and the offended philosopher offered to furnish him with material for composing 'the *decline and fall* of the British Empire.' The *salons* buzzed with expectation; Madame du Deffand communicated her polite fever to Mr. Walpole; and even at Versailles there was a gentle thrill. The portent drove in by the mail from Nantes and descended at lodgings in the Rue de l'Université. The world stared; and how well its stare was rewarded. For, with an uncanny prevision of its demands, Dr. Franklin corresponded in almost every particular with the best contemporary taste. The vogue was all for learning; and here—his spectacles alone proclaimed it—was a philosopher of seventy-two, whom thunderstorms obeyed and learned societies hastened to honour. But he had a higher claim. The world, in 1776, was young and growing younger. It babbled of green fields and played at peasants; it ached for simple virtues; and it adored a noble savage. In an Old World turning eagerly back to its own youth the New World was exquisitely modish; and when its ambassador came upon the town in a plain suit and a fur cap, his vogue was electrical. *Le grand Franklin* was made. No classical allusion came amiss; he was Cato, Fabius, Solon, Diogenes, even Pythagoras. Painters and sculptors, engravers and print-sellers put his likeness on every wall, in rings, on snuff-box lids; whilst an angry tyrant beyond the Channel removed his lightning-rods from the Queen's House and sulkily erected some of a rival pattern. But French policy was still detained by the litigious

delights of an ingenious neutrality. Franklin escaped to Passy; and for a year he struggled to elevate Franco-American relations from the dubious plane of gun-running to a more exalted atmosphere of formal alliance. Diplomacy (and the news of Saratoga) prevailed at last. The new Republic had its first ally; and when Dr. Franklin signed, he wore the suit of Manchester velvet which he had put on in Craven Street five years before for his ordeal in the Committee for Plantation Affairs. For even philosophers are sometimes human. Then came the great day when, unwigged and without a sword, he made his bow to King Louis at Versailles, and Majesty uttered two gracious sentences to the young Republic. The war and Franklin's triumph went slowly on. He saw the Queen at play; he saw Voltaire; he read a paper upon the Aurora Borealis; he listened to innumerable songs in praise of Benjamin and Louis; until at last the gunfire died away, and he set his name to a second treaty. His work was done; and at the end of it all, justly honoured among printers, scientists, Rotarians, and men of letters, he could say with quiet pride that 'tho' I did not think that I should ever literally *stand before kings* . . . I have stood before *five*, and even had the honour of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.' For he was the first American.

Editorial Note—Apropos of 'The Divining Rod' in last month's CORNHILL, Mr. R. Merivale writes to the author from the New University Club: 'I was interested reading your article in June CORNHILL as a similar experience occurred to me many years ago in Devon, at the hands of a country yokel. I too shared the rod with him and found it turned irresistibly, and I was watching his hand closely. No one believes me when I tell the story, so I am glad to welcome some confirmation. I may say water was found but at an uneconomical depth and a dowser with "bigger medicine" had to be procured to find the desired supply.'

R. MERIVALE.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE eighth series of Literary Acrostics begins with No. 29, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of at least £3 will be awarded to the most successful solvers. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is first opened.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 29.

(The First of the Series.)

'Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and ——— of the poor.'

1. 'We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent ———.'
2. 'Ay me! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold ———.'
3. 'The proper study of mankind is ———.'
4. 'A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!'
5. 'O ——— to the royal in thyself,
And ——— to thy land.'
6. 'Drink to me only with thine ———,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed above 'Book Notes' on a later page.

4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.

5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.

6. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.

7. Answers to Acrostic No. 29 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than July 21.

PROEM: Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, ch. 4.

LIGHTS:

1. Cowper, *On the Loss of the Royal George*.

2. Peacock, *Gryll Grange*, ch. 7.

3. Mrs. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ch. 12.

4. Carew, *Obsequies to the Lady Anna Hay*.

5. W. Morris, *The Earthly Paradise. The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon*.

6. Pope, *Imitations of Horace. Satires*, ii., 2.

7. R. Browning, *Eurydice to Orpheus*.

8. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, Nov. (or Dec.), 1775.

9. Alexander Smith, *A Life-Drama*, scene 3.

10. A. Lang, *The Burial of Molière*.

ANSWER TO No. 28.

| | | |
|-------|-----------|---|
| 1. T | empes | T |
| 2. W | ow-wo | W |
| 3. E | xperieno | E |
| 4. E | nspher | E |
| 5. D | rearrihea | D |
| 6. L | eve | L |
| 7. E | urydic | E |
| 8. D | rumgol | D |
| 9. U | ptol | E |
| 10. M | olier | E |

Acrostic No. 27 ('Merry Heart'). Correct answers were received from 129 solvers, and partly correct answers from 62; there were also 6 solutions that did not conform to the rules. The Ingoldsby light was the only one that presented much difficulty, and the Byron quotation eluded a few competitors; the Cowper quotation was known by everybody.

The first correct answer that was opened came from 'Pakeha,' and she takes the monthly prize. Miss B. A. Ward, S. Michael's School, Bognor, is entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

Competitors are requested not to send pins, clips, or other paper-fasteners; their coupons do not require to be fixed in any way. A half sheet of notepaper is best for answers; flimsy paper and big sheets are both undesirable.

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